THE GENTLE ART OF MAKING ENEMIES : EDITED BY SHERIDAN FORD

NEW YORK
FREDERICK STOKES & BROTHER
—
1890

TO

ALL GOOD COMRADES

WHO LIKE A FAIR FIELD AND NO QUARTER

THESE PAGES ARE PEACEFULLY INSCRIBED

NOTE

AS custom would sanction, in a work of this character a complacent boast touching the sometime soulful intimacy between Mr Whistler and myself, I may point out that nothing of the kind existed. The reader might otherwise be pardoned a casual inference that we were on terms of commonplace amity and acquiescence.

I commend the book to Mr Whistler's enemies, with the soothing assurance that should each of them purchase a copy the edition will be exhausted in a week

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LETTERS AND MISCELLANY

SOME WHISTLER STORIES—OLD AND NEW

MR. WHISTLER AS THE 'UNATTACHED WRITER'

THIS collection of letters and miscellany covers something over a quarter of a century, from 1862 to the present year. It illustrates the gentle art of making enemies, and is in part the record of some unpleasantness between the Brush and Pen. The conditions are not devoid of interest, comprising as they do the Painter, the Newspaper and the Public.

The Painter, as personified by Mr. Whistler, is the type of a class.

The Newspaper, as exemplified by the London journals, portrays—as nowhere else—the dignity of the press.

The Public, as illustrated by the British public, is perhaps not wholly unrepresentative of certain phases of art philistinism.

Prior to 1878 Mr. Whistler had written nothing of any value for publication. With the exception of two letters in the *Athenæum*, he would seem indeed to have shunned a resort to the pen, though his work was assailed on all sides. At the outset it met with raillery and official neglect. It was rejected by the Salon in 1859 and 1860, and again in 1863. In the last-named year the *White Girl* was hung in the *Salon des Refusés*, where it won for him a place of honour as a painter among those whose opinion is authority. Going from Paris to London in 1862 he found arrayed against him, as he would have found anywhere, a phalanx of hostile painters and critics, just as he also found in a more restricted circle that sympathy and generous friendship which no stranger seeks in vain in England.

His introduction of titles as a colour-key to his work met with wide-spread ridicule. It is the common lot when a new force, personality, makes itself felt in the field of spiritual production. Artists sufficiently original to interpret nature in a new way

ever meet with misunderstanding on the part of the public. Those who know Mr. Whistler only through his painting and writing are prone to forget—or never realise—the privations he endured in the attainment of his present position. And it should be set down to the eternal credit of the man that not once in his period of trial—at times approaching starvation—did he waver in his devotion to his art.

The mild tone of his first remonstrance with the critics, touching the title of one of his pictures which had been wrongly rendered, is in striking contrast with some of his more recent correspondence:

'May I beg,' he writes to the *Athenæum* of July 5, 1862, 'to correct an erroneous impression likely to be confirmed by a paragraph in your last number? The proprietors of the Berners-street gallery have, without my sanction, called my picture 'The Woman in White.' I had no intention whatever of illustrating Mr. Wilkie Collins' novel; it so happens, indeed, that I have never read it. My painting simply represents a girl dressed

in white standing in front of a white curtain.'

Is it possible that this pacific correspondent, who writes to inquire if he may 'beg to correct an erroneous impression', is the belligerent Mr. Whistler of these days? And by what alchemy was the transformation wrought?

Eleven years later, in the *Athenæum* of November 22nd, 1873, one finds a second letter. Some wag had christened a Whistler canvas at a current exhibition 'The Yacht Race, a Symphony in E Sharp'—and the painter writes to protest against what he terms the 'senseless pun.' The tone is a trifle restive, and it is evident that he is arriving at a clearer understanding of the value of critical impressions, erroneous and other. He bores himself with explanation, complains that he cannot expect those who do not understand his work to refuse themselves any witticism at his expense and points out, with a *naïveté* that would be laughable if it were not pathetic, that he has been prevented writing before by illness

The files of the newspapers from 1862 onward reveal little change in the tone of critical opinion. With few exceptions he meets with continued misunderstanding. Mediocrity is merry at his expense, and pedantry labours to prove that he cannot paint. In 1874 he exhibited the portraits of his mother and of Carlyle, and these for the moment served to stem the tide of hostile feeling. In 1877, however, Mr. Ruskin placed himself at the head of the army of detractors, and perpetrated this pleasing bit of criticism. It may be found in *Fors Clavigera*, of July 2, 1877 : —

'Lastly, the mannerisms and errors of these pictures (by Mr. Burne-Jones) whatever may be their extent, are never affected or indolent. The work is natural to the painter, however strange to us ; and it is wrought with utmost conscience of care, however far, to his own or our desire, the result may yet be incomplete. Scarcely so much can be said for any other pictures of the modern school; their eccentricities are almost always in some degree forced; and their imperfections gratuitously, if not im-

pertinently, indulged. For Mr. Whistler's own sake, no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay ought not to have admitted works into the gallery in which the ill-educated conceit of the artist so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture. I have seen, and heard, much of cockney impudence before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face.'

The school of criticism which would measure the time work of a painter and appraise his productions by the evidence of effort they betray, which confounds colour harmonies with morality, and ranks the talent of the photographer above the genius that interprets, is, unfortunately, still abroad in the land. Error in art, as in religion, dies hard, ministered to by the incompetent in that it excuses their incompetency, and worshipped by the many because it bolsters their ignorance. As a man of letters and a master of style Mr. Ruskin's contribution to English literature is no slight one. Of the bulk of his

picture criticism, silence is best. It is his misfortune, not his fault, that from the outset of his career he has shown himself to be without eye for pictorial art, though, perhaps, posterity will not hold him altogether guiltless for teaching through so many years that painting is 'literature in the flat.'

It is unnecessary to review the Ruskin trial here. Mr. Frith, R. A., illumined the court-room with the assurance that Mr. Whistler's pictures were from an artistic point of view on a par with so much wall-paper. Mr. Burne-Jones, A.R.A., thoughtfully pointed out that they were not pictures at all. The late Tom Taylor, then art critic of the *Times*, gave 'evidence' of a like tenor; and a jury of connoisseurs assessed at one farthing the damages which Mr. Whistler had sustained.

His legal joust taught him, if it taught him nothing else, that the law as a truth compeller is sometimes a poor creature. Previous to this period he had submitted to the wrath of the reviewer without attempting to answer back. The result of the trial

led him to take up the pen, and henceforth he is found fighting for his own hand. The trial took place in November, 1878, and in December the *brochure* of *Whistler v. Ruskin—Art and Art Critics*, saw the light. The device of the butterfly, with which he has since signed his paintings, etchings, and letters, first appeared on its brown-paper cover. It was the answer to those who had likened him to a butterfly broken upon a wheel.

For asserting in the *brochure* that Art has no need of the Pen, Mr. Whistler brought upon himself the reproaches of the critics.

I confess that I agree with him. The dainty goddess needs neither to be explained nor translated. She remains serene and self-contained whatever happens, unvexed by the endless babble around her, unheeding the misguided zeal of would-be friends who want to help a good cause and don't know how. The clamour of faction is hushed ere it reaches her ears. Poor painters and foolish critics pass and are forgotten, but Art remains—

and no more needs an editor than the Almighty needs a testimonial.

Mr. Whistler, however, goes farther, and would extinguish the critic altogether. It is idle at this day to discuss the relative power of the brush and the movable type. In face of the fact that painters the world over have recourse to the printed word in order to propagandize, debate as to the utility of art writing would seem to be measurably closed. What more delicious satire could Mr. Whistler pass upon himself than that of joining the ranks of those whose existence he deplores!

For the fact is that, while Art has no need of the Pen, the Public, of which the Newspaper is the voice, has need of Art, and the Pen must be reckoned with. If, since the critics first employed it, not one had been worthy, this in itself would not prove that in the right hands it might not be made helpful.

Not all artists paint, any more than all painters are artists. In the first instance, it is the thought and brush that bestow

the *cachet* on a picture. With the artis
mentality to properly select and rend
a colour scheme or pictorial problem, tec
nique is to the painter what style is
the man of letters. It is the record
apology which he leaves behind him
having attempted to interpret natu
at all. In the end the *cachet* passes cu
rent in a wide or restricted sense as
may happen, through the approval of t
judicious.

The impressions of the expert in ligh
atmosphere, colour and form — endow
with the supreme artistic temperament
are quite as authentic as the brushwork
the painter. When expert opinion is p
forth through printed words, its vali
is self-registered; not that many a
influenced by the impact, for the mar
need to have a truth brought home
them repeatedly ere it receive welcom
but the few understand, and the fe
make opinion.

'Why trouble about so slight a matter
said a friend to a journalist who was star
ing after midnight for a newspaper offic

that he might correct a trifling error of fact that had slipped into his leader for the morning,—'hardly one reader in a hundred will notice it.' 'Ah,' was the reply, 'that's the man I'm after. If I win him, I'm sure of the ninety-nine.'

And so indeed it is. But let there be no mistake. Not that in art the ninety-nine can be taught. Far from it; but some of them may be influenced. And though very few experts are in the art critics' places and the foolish would seem entrenched for all time, yet the game will go on, though the painter on one hand cry 'enough,' and on the other the incompetent demonstrate again the fatal facility of incompetence. One art critic here and there, in fact, as well as name, establishes the usefulness and dignity of the office. He does not excuse the ignorant, but to say that the ignorant condemn him is to mistake fiction for truth.

As well assert that because thousands of foolish painters—*en route* to oblivion—are wasting paint and canvas in England, therefore the twenty or less capable ones

should, with the great army of mediocrity, be gently urged to desist. Art, in any event, does not decline. It is neither marred by poor painting nor bad writing.

After the Ruskin trial then, Mr. Whistler joins the ranks of the 'unattached writer.' With the assurance born of habit, his tone toward the critic suddenly changes from the mild explanatory one of 1862, and the deprecatory one of 1873, to that of complete intolerance. Contrast, for instance, his first letter to the *Athenæum* with this clever thrust in the *World*, of Dec. 29, 1880: —

'Atlas, *mon bon, méfiez-vous de vos gens!* Your art gentleman says that Mr. Whistler exhibits twelve etchings, 'slight in execution and unimportant in size.' Now the private assassin you keep for us need not be hampered by mere connoisseurship in the perpetration of his duty—therefore, *passé* for the execution—but he should not compromise his master's reputation for brilliancy, and print things that he who runs may scoff at. Seriously, then, my Atlas, an etching does not depend for its importance upon its size. 'I am not arguing with

you, I am telling you.' As well speak of one of your own charming *mots* as unimportant in length. Look to it, Atlas. Be severe with your man. Tell him his 'job' should be neatly done. I could cut my own throat better; and, if need be, in case of his dismissal, I offer my services.'

The initial exhibition of Venice Etchings opened in December 1880. The dainty products of a genius second to none in etching met with contempt at the hands of men posing as experts in these matters. Few artists are unaffected by concurrent detraction, but Mr Whistler, grown callous through misunderstanding, was in no mood to be 'slain by a review.' With a delightful audacity he culled choice examples of the most adverse criticism from their respective sources, and, embodying them in the brown-paper catalogue of his second exhibition of Venice Etchings, with the title of *Mr. Whistler and his Critics*, he invited the public to pass upon the merits of the case. 'Out of their own mouths shall ye judge them,' appeared on the first page of the text.

In the same month of February, 1883, the newspapers of the English metropolis contained columns of praise and reports of posthumous honours to another painter, honours and praise, during his lifetime, denied. The Royal Academy, which had ignored the living man, hastened to crown him – dead. The public was not slow to take the point, and Mr. Whistler's exhibition and catalogue were the talk of artistic London.

His views regarding pictorial art are clearly stated in these words : —

'The vast majority of folk cannot and will not consider a picture as a picture, apart from any story which it may be supposed to tell.

'My picture of a 'Harmony in Grey and Gold' is an illustration of my meaning — a snow scene with a single black figure and a lighted tavern Now that to me is a harmony of colour only. I care nothing for the past, present, or future of the black figure, placed there because the black was wanted at that spot. All that I know is that my combination of grey and gold satisfies my artistic feeling. Now this is

recisely what my friends will not grasp. They say, 'Why not call it Trotty Veck, nd sell it for a round harmony of golden uineas?'

'I reply simply that I will do nothing of he kind. Not even the genius of Dickens hould be invoked to lend an adventitious id to art of another kind from his. Speak- ng under correction, I should hold it a ulgar and meretricious trick to excite eople about Trotty Veck when, if they eally care for pictorial art at all, they would now that the picture should have its own nerit, and never depend upon dramatic, r legendary, or local interest . . .

'Art should be independent of all clap- rap—should stand alone, and appeal to he artistic sense of eye or ear, without onfounding this with emotions entirely oreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism, and the like. All these have o kind of concern with it, and that is why I insist on calling my works arrange- nents and harmonies.

'Take the picture of my mother, ex- ibited at the Royal Academy as an

'Arrangement in Grey and Black.' Now that is what it is. To me it is interesting as a picture of my mother; but what can or ought the public to care about the identity of the portrait? It must stand or fall on its merits as an arrangement.'.

This is Mr. Whistler's position, that is to say, art for its own sake; the position of one whose contributions to art are noteworthy among the English speaking painters of his day. It does not detract in the slightest from its strength that, as pointed out, 'the vast majority of folk cannot and will not consider a picture as a picture, apart from any story which it may be supposed to tell.' Surely the painter needs not to concern himself with the sentiment his work evokes, nor the point, or points, of contact between it and the beholder. It is for him to paint the picturesque and beautiful about him because it is beautiful and picturesque. How far he penetrates nature, what he sees, what feels, and what interprets, must be the measure of the painter's capacity; but, clearly, all that he has to do is to see, feel and render, leaving the rest with Time.

An instance of this point of view regarding pictorial art—from the standpoint of the producer—is afforded in an important picture just completed in London by Mr. Matthÿs Maris, the master of living Dutch artists. It depicts a single figure—a woman—with face upturned in contemplation. It is a dream of witchery and penetrative passion—one of the few great pictures of this generation. No finer type of spiritual beauty ever illumined a canvas. Mr. Maris calls it *A Study*—nothing else. The picture is not so poor in paint, so feeble in conception that it is needful to link it to the touching story of the Cross, or to some title suggestive of literary association. It may, and indeed does, arouse conflicting emotions, but through no parochial or legendary interest. The art is complete in itself.

As a letter writer Mr. Whistler is unique. He is an adept in the art of interesting. At times wrapping his innuendoes in graceful satire, again he forsakes *finesse* and indulges in untempered onslaughts, as in the letter to the National

Art Exhibition concerning the connec
tion of Mr. Quilter and Mr. Wilde with
the movement. In the correspondence
with Mr. Child he employs suggestion
and phrases that, to say the least, are
unpleasant. In places his alliteration be
comes excessive, his manner artificial; the
ego is ever present, but the nimble wi
often condones the faults of style. There
are no tears in his laughter, and the sub
limities of the imagination are as a thing
apart. He neither asks for quarter no
gives it, and anger, like a white flame
sometimes mars his message.

Ridicule is his strongest weapon. Som
of his rejoinders are without the slightes
bearing upon the matter at issue—th
correspondence with Mr Child being i
point. The latter had written in a ver
appreciative way of Mr. Whistler's paint
ing and etching, ranking him with th
masters of all time. Later, he published
scathing review of the *Ten o'Clock*, an
aroused the author's ire, who taunted hin
with being a turn-coat. A spirited correspon
dence ensued—upon the part of Mr. Child-

who endeavoured to prove his consistency, and did so. Yet in his last letter, provoked by what he deemed unmerited reproaches, he permitted himself to be betrayed into calling names. By rarely taking matters seriously in his own letters, Mr. Whistler manages in many cases to cover his opponent with ridicule, and when ridicule is afoot, the public will join in the laugh rather than condole with the victim.

Take Mr. Wilde's reply to Mr. Whistler's comment upon his report of the *Ten o'Clock* in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Mr. Wilde had written that ' the poet is the supreme artist, the real musician and master of form and colour, and lord over all life and all arts, ' and had pointed out that 'these mysteries are known to Poe and Baudelaire, and not to Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche. ' Mr. Whistler at once congratulated him upon the *naïveté* of the poet in the selection of his painters.

'By the aid of a biographical dictionary,' answered Mr. Wilde, ' I made the discovery that there were once two painters called Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche,

who rashly lectured upon art. As of their works nothing at all remains, I conclude that they explained themselves away. Be warned in time, James, and remain, as I do, incomprehensible. To be great is to be misunderstood. '

A very palpable hit, not the less so that ' to be great is to be misunderstood ' had already seen service in Emerson's essay on *Self-Reliance!* In truth it detracts from Mr. Whistler's joy when his opponent meets *persiflage* with *persiflage*, rather than explanation and tedious argument.

For he himself never proses. Even in the letter refuting a charge contained in an interview with Mr. Bayliss, that Mr. Whistler's *régime* was responsible for the gloomy financial outlook of the Royal Society of British Artists, he contrives, while dealing with statistics, to preserve the sparkle of his style. Indeed in its way what could be happier than this?

' But behold, upon closer inspection— these threatening figures (Mr. Bayliss's) are meretricious, and misleading, as was

the building account of the early Philanthropist, who, in the days of St. Paul, meant well and was abruptly discouraged by that clear-headed apostle. . . Now, though he (Mr. Whistler) did his best, and cried aloud that the coach was safe, and called it Royal, and proposed to carry the mail, confidence, difficult to restore, waited for proof; and, although fresh paint was spread upon the panels, and the President coachman wore his hat, with knowing air, on one side, and handled the ribbons lightly and dandled the drag, inviting jauntily the passer-by, the public recognised the ramshackle old conveyance, and scoffingly refused to trust themselves in the hearse. Four thousand pounds!—down it went—£ 3,000—£ 2,000—the figures are Wyke's—and this season, the ignominious £ 1,000 or under, is none of my booking! and when last I saw the mad machine, it was still cycling down the hill.'

During Mr. Whistler's presidency of the Society, a painter, whose work had been rejected, once took occasion to assert in the *Daily News* that it would 'be for the

patrons to decide whether the half uncovered walls of the exhibition were more interesting than the work of many artists of more than average merit, conspicuous by its absence. '

' It will be,' wrote Mr. Whistler in reply, ' for the patrons to decide absolutely nothing. It is, and will always be, for the gentlemen of the hanging commitee alone, duly chosen, to decide whether empty space be preferable to poor pictures —whether, in short, it be their duty to cover walls, merely that walls may be covered, no matter with what quality of work. Indeed, the period of the patron has utterly passed away, and the painter takes his place—to point out what he knows to be consistent with the demands of his art—without deference to patrons or prejudice to party.'

These are brave words. It is to be regretted that the spirit of uncompromising independence that prompted them does not obtain more among painters. It is because Mr. Whistler insists that they should recognise their proper place that

his words deserve to be sympathetically weighed.

In his letter to Mr. Labouchère concerning 'the commercial travellers of art,' he is decidedly at his best. Beneath the play of fancy one notes the earnestness of the painter who feels to the quick the artistic worthlessness of popular applause, and resents the counting-room test of success as applied to pictures.

'How in the name of all that is incompetent' he asks Mr. Labouchère, 'do you find much virtue in work spreading over more time? What means this affectation of *naïveté?* We all know that work excuses itself only by reason of its quality. If the work is foolish, it surely is not less foolish because an honest and misspent life-time has been passed in producing it. What matters it that the offending worker has grown old among us, and has endeared himself to many by his caprices as ratepayer and neighbour? Personally, he may have claims upon his surroundings; but, as the painter of poor pictures, he is damned forever. . . Learn, then, O! Henry, that

there is no such thing as English art. You might as well talk of English mathematics. Art is art, and mathematics is mathematics. What you call English art is not art at all, but produce, of which there is, and always has been, and always will be a plenty, whether the men producing it are dead and called ——— or (I refer you to your own selection—far be it for me to choose) —or alive and called ———, whosoever you like as you turn over the Academy catalogue. . . They all belong to the excellent army of mediocrity; the differences between them being infinitely small—mere microscopic—as compared to the vast difference between any one of them and the great. They are the commercial travellers of art, whose works are their wares, and whose exchange is the Academy.'

A sweeping generalization, and, as are most generalizations, too broad, yet with enough of truth to justify it. But what a flavour of sincerity it has! It is one thing to deprecate in private the methods of those in power; it is another to make

the unofficial cause your own, and do open battle for it.

Nothing — seemingly — affects Mr. Whistler, and what would dispirit most men but adds to the relish of his existence. The unexpected has no terror for him. Thus we find him, when a newspaper in its report of the Graham sale noted that one of his 'nocturnes' was received with hisses, writing a blithesome letter to the editor, acknowledging 'the distinguished though unconscious compliment so publicly paid. It is rare,' he adds, with a sense of humour rarer still, 'that recognition so complete is made during the life-time of the painter, and I would wish to have recorded my full sense of this flattering exception in my favour.'

What an enviable cast of mind that can look with serenity beyond the fleeting judgment of contemporaries, in the faith that posterity will reverse the verdict! This is not egotism merely. It is the sanity of genius, speaking as it once spoke in a certain impecunious but stout-hearted man of letters when a bourgeois oppressor was

advised to take careful note of the name of Jean Paul, as the time was approaching when he could afford neither to ignore nor despise it.

Contrast Mr. Whistler's definition of the masterpiece with Mr. Ruskin's words when writing of pictures 'wrought with utmost conscience of care . . . and whose errors and mannerisms are never affected or indolent':—

'A picture is finished when all trace of the means used to bring about the end has disappeared. To say of a picture, as is often said in its praise, that it shows great and earnest labour, is to say that it is incomplete and unfit for view. Industry in art is a necessity, not a virtue,—and any evidence of the same, in the production, is a blemish, not a quality,—a proof not of achievement, but of absolutely insufficient work: for work alone will efface the footsteps of work. The work of the master reeks not of the sweat of the brow,—suggests no effort,—and is finished from its beginning. The completed task of perseverance only has never been begun, and

will remain unfinished to eternity—a monument of good will and foolishness. 'There is one that laboureth, and taketh pains, and maketh haste, and is so much the more behind.' The masterpiece should appear as the flower to the painter,—perfect in its bud as in its bloom,—with no reason to explain its presence,—no mission to fulfil,—a joy to the artist,—a delusion to the philanthropist,—a puzzle to the botanist,—an accident of sentiment and alliteration to the literary man.'

When two years ago, in the pages of the *Ten o'Clock*, Mr. Whistler published his ripened thought upon art, it was to be expected that the embodiment would be a complete one. That he realized the weight that attached to his utterance from the fact that it stood for the final word of a painter who has as great a following among painters as any modern, will of course be taken for granted.

During the years that he was maturing the *Ten o'Clock*, England was passing through a phase of the pre-Raphaelite movement distasteful to every artistic mind.

The craze had its day and died. Of the two local allusions in the work, one refers to this movement and the other to Mr. Ruskin. With these exceptions it is devoid of local colour.

Though not written under headings, it groups itself naturally into seven divisions, exclusive of what might be termed the introduction. First, a theory of art's beginnings, followed by an exposition of the relative parts played by nature and the painter. The critic, or, as Mr. Whistler calls him, the middleman, is dealt with and then the question of 'the people,' followed by a refutation of the current fallacy concerning art's decay. After a discussion of it as a moral agent, there is a conclusion of singular beauty regarding art's achievements. Mr. Whistler does not believe in the democracy of art, and states his case with a clearness and charm doubly interesting at a time when an attempt is being made to popularise it in England. This is only a bare outline of the work. An extended review would be manifestly out of place, as it has not been

included in this collection of his public utterances. It is enough to say that it is destined, despite a mistaken view as to the universal joyousness of art, to hold its own as one of the best pieces of criticism extant.

Writing such as Mr. Whistler's is not without its uses in an age of 'culture,' when not to prate of art is to confess oneself 'uncultivated,' and when every amateur can hear the chiming church bell as he stands gazing at Millet's over-praised *Angelus*.

As long as art endures, the pen that brings confusion upon pretenders will continue to benefit artists, burdened as they are with a cant that is the curse of the situation. In his tilts with the critics Mr. Whistler has rendered artists a service. If he has in many instances forgotten the individual as against the point at issue, let those censure who may. If, in a single instance, his language has surpassed in severity that used by Mr. Ruskin his best known detractor, let it be pointed out. As an artist fighting

the battles of artists, he has given a blithesome account of himself. It is clear that with a catholic vision and a kindlier impulse he might have evoked a wider influence. But those who deprecate his method forget that though a disputant he is primarily a painter, and that without a militant self-assertion he would never have had recourse to the pen to parry Mr. Ruskin's straight thrust, or to expose to merited ridicule the futile picture babble which critics of a certain school affect.

SHERIDAN FORD.

Paris, March, 1890.

LETTERS

AND

MISCELLANY

'*The World*,'
York Street,
Covent Garden, W.C.

DEAR SIR,—I am obliged by your courtesy. You are quite at liberty to reprint Mr. Whistler's letters and other matter concerning him, which have appeared in these columns.

Faithfully yours,
EDMUND YATES.

Sept. 19, 1889.
To Sheridan Ford, Esq.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE

A NEW exhibition of pictures has been opened in Berners-street. The most prominent is a striking but incomplete picture by Mr. Whistler, ' The Woman in White. ' The face is well done, but it is not that of Mr. Wilkie Collins's ' Woman in White. '

The Athenæum, * June 28, 1862.

* Where the place of publication is not given the newspaper is printed in London.

AN ERRONEOUS IMPRESSION

MAY I beg to correct an erroneous impression likely to be confirmed by a paragraph in your last number? The proprietors of the Berners Street gallery have, without my sanction, called my picture 'The Woman in White.' I had no intention whatsoever of illustrating Mr. Wilkie Collins' novel; it so happens, indeed, that I have never read it. My painting simply represents a girl dressed in white standing in front of a white curtain. I am, etc.,

JAMES WHISTLER.

The Athenæum, July 5, 1862.

TITLES A KEY TO MY WORK

I WISH through the *Athenæum* to correct an error now current about the title of a picture of mine at the Society of French Artists in Bond Street. I am supposed to have named it 'The Yacht Race, a Symphony in B sharp'; and it is suggested that in so doing I have perpetrated a senseless pun. M. Deschamps did not purchase the picture from me, and I hear from him that he found the silly title in question written on the back of the canvas. The titles I have hitherto given to my pictures have been intended by me as a key to my work simply; but I cannot expect others, who do not understand them, to refuse themselves any witticism, like the above brilliant parody, on the subject. I have been prevented writing to you before by illness.

JAMES WHISTLER.

The Athenæum, Nov. 22, 1873.

NOT PRECISELY A SYMPHONY

IN the ' Symphony in white ' by Mr. Whistler there are many dainty varieties of tint, but it is not precisely a symphony in white. One lady has a yellowish dress and brown hair and a bit of blue ribbon, the other has a red fan, and there are flowers and green leaves. There is a girl in white on a white sofa, but even this girl has reddish hair; and of course there is the flesh colour of the complexions.

The Saturday Review, June 1, 1867.

WHITE HAIR AND CHALKED FACES

CAN anything be more amazing than the stultified prattle of this poor person? 'Not precisely a symphony in white . . . for there is a yellowish dress . . . brown hair, etc. . . . another with reddish hair . . . and of course there is the flesh colour of the complexions.'

Bon Dieu! did this creature expect white hair and chalked faces? And does he then in his astounding wisdom believe that a symphony in F contains no other note, but shall be a continued repetition of F, F, F, F, F? . . . Fool!

JAMES WHISTLER.

June, 1867. Not printed till April, 1887, when it appeared in the *Art Journal*.

FLINGING A POT OF PAINT IN THE PUBLIC'S FACE

LASTLY the mannerisms and errors of these pictures (by Mr. Burne-Jones), whatever may be their extent, are never affected or indolent. The work is natural to the painter, however strange to us ; and it is wrought with utmost conscience of care, however far, to his own or our desire, the result may yet be incomplete. Scarcely so much can be said for any other pictures of the modern school ; their eccentricities are almost always in some degree forced ; and their imperfections gratuitously, if not impertinently, indulged. For Mr. Whistler's own sake, no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay ought not to have admitted works into the gallery in which the ill-educated conceit of the artist so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture. I have seen, and heard, much of cockney impudence before now ; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face.

JOHN RUSKIN.

Fors Clavigera, July 2, 1877.

LINLEY SAMBOURNE

AN 'ARRANGEMENT' IN FRITH, JONES, *PUNCH*, AND RUSKIN*

MY dear Sambourne, — I know I shall be only charmed, as I always am, by your work, and if I am myself its subject, I shall only be flattered in addition. *Punch* in person sat upon me in the box; why should not the most subtle of his staff have a shot? Moreover, whatever delicacy and refinement Tom Taylor may still have left in his pocket (from which, in court, he drew his ammunition) I doubt not he will urge you to use, that it may not be wasted. Meanwhile you must not throw away sentiment upon what you call 'this trying time'. To have brought about an 'Arrangement in Frith, Jones, *Punch* and Ruskin, with a touch of Titian,' is a joy, and in itself sufficient to satisfy even my craving for curious 'combinations.'— Ever yours,

JAMES WHISTLER.

The World, Dec. 11, 1878.

* In reply to a note from the genial Mr. Sambourne disclaiming any desire to offend in his *Punch* cartoon of the Whistler-Ruskin trial.

TOM TAYLOR

A CASE OF VIVISECTION*

'*SANS rancune*' by all means, my dear Whistler; but you should not have quoted from my article, of June 6th, 1874, on Velasquez, in such a way as to give exactly the opposite impression to that which the article, taken as a whole, conveys.

I appreciate and admire Velasquez as entirely, and, allow me to say, as intelligently, as yourself. I have probably seen and studied more of his work than you have. And I maintain that the article you have garbled in your quotation gives a fair and adequate account of the picture it deals with— '*Las Meninas*'— and one which any artist who knows the picture would, in essentials, subscribe to.

God help the artists if ever the criticism of pictures falls into the hands of painters! It would be a case of vivisection all round.

Your pamphlet is a very natural result of your late disagreeable legal experiences, though not a very wise one.

* Called out by Mr. Taylor receiving from Mr. Whistler a copy of *Whistler* v. *Ruskin; Art and Art Critics*, inscribed, '*Sans rancune.*'

If the critics are not better qualified to deal with the painters than the painter in your pamphlet shows himself qualified to deal with the critics, it will be a bad day for art when the hands that have been trained to the brush lay it aside for the pen.

If you had read my article on Velasquez, I cannot but say that you have made an unfair use of it, in quoting a detached sentence, which, read with the context, bears exactly the opposite sense from that you have quoted it as bearing.

This is a bad 'throw-off' in the critical line, whether it affect '*le premier littérateur venu*' or yours always,

TOM TAYLOR.

P. S. As your attack on my article is public, I reserve to myself the right of giving equal publicity to this letter.

Jan. 6, 1879.

The World, Jan. 15, 1879.

LEAVE VENGEANCE TO THE LORD

DEAD for a ducat, dead ! my dear Tom : and the rattle has reached me by post.

' *Sans rancune* ' say you ? Bah ! you scream unkind threats and die badly.

Why squabble over your article ? You *did* print what I quote, you know, Tom ; and it is surely unimportant what more you have written of the master. That you should have written anything at all is your crime.

No ; shrive your naughty soul, and give up Velasquez, and pass your last days properly in the Home Office.

Set your house in order with the Government for arrears of time and paper, and leave vengeance to the Lord, who will forgive my ' garbling ' Tom Taylor's writing,

Jan. 8, 1879.

The World, Jan. 15, 1879.

TOM TAYLOR

A LITTLE MISUNDERSTANDING

PARDON me, my dear Whistler, for having taken you *au sérieux* even for a moment.

I ought to have remembered that your penning, like your painting, belongs to the region of 'chaff.' I will not forget it again; and meantime remain yours always,

TOM TAYLOR.

Jan. 9, 1879.

The World, Jan. 15, 1879.

TOM TAYLOR

NEVER SERIOUS

WHY, my dear old Tom, I never *was* serious with you, even when you were among us. Indeed, I killed you quite, as who should say, without seriousness, 'A rat! A rat!' you know, rather cursorily. Chaff, Tom as in your present state you are beginning to perceive, was your fate here, and doubtless will be throughout the eternity before you. With ages at your disposal, this truth will dimly dawn upon you; and as you look back upon this life, perchance many situations that you took *au sérieux* (art-critic, who knows, expounder of Velasquez, and what not) will explain themselves sadly — chaff! Go back!

Jan. 10, 1879.

The World, Jan. 15, 1879.

A DISCORD IN BLACK AND WHITE

MR. WHISTLER has written a discord in black and white. Mr. Ruskin's 'high sounding empty things' would, he says, 'give Titian the same shock of surprise that was Balaam's when the first great critic proffered his opinion'... The inference ... is that all the world, competent and incompetent together, must receive the painter's work in silence, under pain of being classed with Balaam's ass...

If, finding himself ill received or ill understood, he has to say, 'you did not understand me,' he must also say, 'I did not understand myself and you, to whom I speak, sufficiently well to make you understand me.'

There could be no better illustration of all this than that Mr. Whistler has suggested of Balaam's ass. For the ass was right, although, nay, because he was an ass. 'What have I done unto thee,' said he, 'that thou hast smitten me these three times?' 'Because thou hast mocked me,' replies Balaam-Whistler; when the Angel of the Lord rebukes him and says, 'The ass saw me,' so that Balaam is constrained to bow his head and fall flat on his

face. The ass sees the Angel of the Lord there where the wise prophet sees nothing, and by her seeing saves the life of the very master who, for reward, smites her grievously and wishes he had a sword that he might kill her.

Let Balaam not forget that after all he rides upon the ass, that she has served him well ever since she was his until this day, and that even now he is on his way with her to be promoted unto very great honour by the Princes of Balak. And let him remember that whatever can speak may at any moment have a word to say to him which it were best he should hear.

RASPER.

Vanity Fair, Jan. 11, 1879.

A CRITIC WHO SAW THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

WELL hit! my dear *Vanity*, and, I find on searching again, that historically you are right. The fact, doubtless, explains the conviction of the race in their mission, but I fancy you will admit that this is the only Ass on record who ever did 'see the Angel of the Lord'! and that we are past the age of miracles. — Yours always,

Vanity Fair, Jan. 18, 1879.

PICTORIAL ART INDEPENDENT OF LOCAL INTEREST

WHY should not I call my works symphonies, arrangements, harmonies and nocturnes? I know that many good people, whose sense of humour is not very capacious, think my nomenclature funny and myself eccentric. Yes, eccentric is the best adjective they find for me. I admit that it is easier to laugh at a man than to appreciate him.

The vast majority of English folk cannot and will not consider a picture as a picture, apart from any story which it may be supposed to tell.

My picture of a 'Harmony in Grey and Gold' is an illustration of my meaning—a snow scene with a single black figure and a lighted tavern. Now that to me is a harmony of colour only. I care nothing for the past, present, or future of the black figure, placed there because the black was wanted at that spot. All that I know is that my combination of grey and gold satisfies my artistic feeling. Now this is precisely what my friends will not grasp.

They say, 'Why not call it 'Trotty Veck, and sell it for a round harmony of golden guineas?'

I reply simply that I will do nothing of the kind. Not even the genius of Dickens should be invoked to lend an adventitious aid to art of another kind from his. Speaking under correction, I should hold it a vulgar and meretricious trick to excite people about Trotty Veck when, if they really care for pictorial art at all, they would know that the picture should have its own merit, and never depend upon dramatic, or legendary, or local interest.

As music is the poetry of sound, so is painting the poetry of sight, and the subject-matter has nothing to do with harmony of sound or of colour.

The great musicians knew this. Beethoven and the rest wrote music—simply music ; symphony in this key, concerto or sonata in that.

On F or G they constructed celestial harmonies as harmonies, as combinations, evolved from the chords of F or G and their minor correlatives.

This is pure music as distinguished from airs—commonplace and vulgar in themselves, but interesting from their associations, as, for instance, 'Yankee Doodle,' or 'Partant pour la Syrie.'

Art should be independent of all clap-trap—should stand alone, and appeal to the artistic sense of eye or ear, without confounding this

with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion pity, love, patriotism, and the like. All these have no kind of concern with it; and that is why I insist on calling my works arrangements and harmonies.

Take the picture of my mother, exhibited at the Royal Academy as an 'Arrangement in Grey and Black.' Now that is what it is. To me it is interesting as a picture of my mother; but what can or ought the public to care about the identity of the portrait?

The imitator is a poor kind of creature. If the man who paints only the tree, or flower, or other surface he sees before him were an artist, the king of artists would be the photographer. It is for the artist to do something beyond this: in portrait painting to put on canvas something more than the face the model wears for that one day; to paint the man, in short, as well as his features; in arrangement of colours to treat a flower as his key, not as his model.

This is now understood indifferently well — at least by dressmakers. In every costume you see attention is paid to the key-note of colour which runs through the composition, as the chant of the Anabaptists through the *Prophète*, or the Huguenots's hymn in the opera of that name.

The World, May 22, 1878. Interview. 'Celebrities at Home: Mr. James Whistler at Cheyne Walk.'

F. SEYMOUR HADEN

A STORM IN AN ÆSTHETIC TEA-POT

THE exhibition of etchings at the Hanover Gallery has been the occasion of one of those squabbles which amuse everybody — perhaps, including even the quarrellers themselves. Some etchings, exceedingly like Mr Whistler's in manner, but signed 'Frank Duveneck,' were sent to the Painter-Etchers' Exhibition from Venice. The Painter-etchers appear to have suspected for a moment that the works were really Mr. Whistler's; and, not desiring to be the victims of an easy hoax on the part of that gentleman, three of their members — Dr. Seymour Haden, Dr. Hamilton, and Mr. Legros — went to the Fine Art Society's Gallery, in New Bond-street, and asked one of the assistants there to show them some of Mr. Whistler's Venetian plates. From this assistant they learned that Mr. Whistler was under an arrangement to exhibit and sell his Venetian etchings only at the Fine Art Society's Gallery; but, even if these Painter-etchers really believed that 'Frank Duveneck' was only another name for James Whistler, this information about the Fine Art Society's arrangement with

him need not have shaken that belief, for the *nom de plume* might easily have been adopted with the concurrence of the society's leading spirits. Nor is it altogether certain that the Painter-etchers did anything more than compare, for their own satisfaction as connoisseurs, the works of Mr. Whistler and 'Frank Duveneck.' The motive of their doing so may have been misunderstood by the Fine Art Society's assistant with whom they conferred.

Be that as it may, Mr. Whistler has addressed a letter to Mr. Seymour Haden (who is, by the way, *his brother-in-law*), of which all that need be here said, is that it is extremely characteristic of Mr. Whistler. 'Is it,' he writes, 'officially as the Painter-etchers' president that you pry about the town? Of what nature, pray, is the necessary duty that has led two medical men and a Slade professor to fail as connoisseurs and blunder as detectives?' Mr. Whistler thinks these queries so pertinent, aud in such perfect taste, that he has had the letter in which they appear printed, and a copy of it sent to all the members of the Painter-Etchers Society's committee. Has Mr. Whistler, whose work often commands respect, no judicious friends? If he has they have surely left town for the Easter holidays.

The Cuckoo, Apr. 12, 1881.

F. SEYMOUR HADEN

TWO MEDICAL MEN AND A SLADE PROFESSOR

SOME time ago I referred to a storm in an 'æsthetic tea-pot' that was brewed and had burst in the Fine Art Society's Gallery, in *re* Mr. Whistler's Venice Etchings. It seems to me that Mr. Seymour Haden, Mr. Legros, and Mr. Hamilton stumbled on an artistic mare's nest, that they rashly suggested that Mr. Whistler had been guilty of gross misfeasance in publishing etchings in an assumed name, and that they are now trying to get out of the scrape as best they may. This is, however, simply an opinion formed on perusal of the following documents, which I here present to my readers to judge of:

No. I. The following paragraph was sometime ago sent to me with this letter: —

'If the editor of *The Cuckoo* should see his way to the publication of the accompanyng paragraph as it stands, twenty copies may be sent, for circulation among the Council of the Society of Painter-Etchers, to Mr. Piker, newsvendor, Shepherd's Market.'

'Mr. Whistler and the Painter-Etchers. — Our explanation of this 'storm in a tea-pot,'

turns out to have been in the main correct. It appears that not only were the three gentlemen who went to the Fine Art Society's gallery to look at Mr. Whistler's etchings guiltless of offense, but that the object of their going there was actually less to show that Mr. Whistler *was* than that he was *not* the author of the etchings which for a moment had puzzled them.

'For this, indeed, they seem to have given each other—in the presence of the blundering assistant, of course—three very distinct reasons.

'Firstly, that, as already stated, Mr. Seymour Haden had quite seriously written to Mr. Duveneck to buy the etchings.

'Secondly, that they at once accepted as satisfactory and sufficient the explanation given them of Mr. Whistler's obligations to the Fine Art Society; and, thirdly, though this account appears to have somehow slipped altogether out of the indictment—they were one and all of opinion that, taken all round, the Duveneck etchings were the *best of the two*. It is a pity a clever man like Mr. Whistler is yet not clever enough to see that while habitual public attacks on a near relative cannot fail to be, to the majority of people, unpalatable, they are likely to be, when directed against a brother etcher, even *suspecte.*'

I did not at the time 'see my way' to pub-

lishing the paragraph ' as it stands, ' but, having subsequently received the following correspondence, I think it only right to give Mr. Piker's paragraph publicity, along with the letters subjoined :—

To Seymour Haden, Esq. — My dear Sir, — Mr. Whistler has called upon me respecting your visit here yesterday with Mr. Legros and Dr. Hamilton, the purport of which had been communicated to him by Mr. Brown.

He is naturally indignant that, knowing, as you apparently did, that he was under an engagement not to publish for a certain time any etchings of Venice except those issued by us, you should suggest that they were his work, and had been sent in by him under a *nom de plume*.

He considers that it is damaging to his reputation in connection with us. and he requests me to write and ask you whether you adhere to your opinion or retract it.

Believe me to remain, yours faithfully,

MARCUS B. HUISH,

Mar. 18, 1881. Secretary Fine Art Society.

To M. Huish, Esq. — Dear Sir, — I am in receipt of a letter, in which you first impute to me an opinion which I have never held, and then call me to account for that opinion. To a peremptory letter so framed, I shall not be misunderstood if I simply decline to plead.

Meanwhile, that I was *not* of opinion that the etchings in our hands were by Mr. Whistler is conclusively proved by the fact that on the day after their reception I had written to Mr. Duveneck to arrange for their purchase !

Be this, however, as it may, I can have no hesitation on the part both of myself and of the gentlemen engaged with me in a necessary duty, in expressing our sincere regret if, by a mistaken representation of our proceedings, Mr. Whistler has been led to believe that we had said or implied anything which could give him pain or reflect in any way either with you or your directors.

Faithfully yours,

F. Seymour Haden.

38, Hertford-street, Mayfair, W., Mar. 21, 1881.

To Seymour Haden, Esq. — Sir, — Mr. Huish handed me your letter of the 21st inst., since when I have waited in vain for the true version that I doubted not would follow the ' mistaken representation ' you regret I should have received.

Now I must ask that you will, if possible, without further delay, give me a thorough explanation of your visit to the Fine Art Society's Gallery on the 17th inst., — involving, as it did, a discussion of my affairs.

Did you, accompanied by M. Legros and Dr. Hamilton, call at the Fine Art Society's rooms on that date, and ask to see Mr. Whistler's

etchings? Did you there proceed to make a careful and minute examination of these, and then ask Mr. Brown if Mr. Whistler had done other etchings of Venice?

Upon his answer in the affirmative, did you ask Mr. Brown if any of the other plates were large ones, and, notably, whether Mr. Whistler had done any other plate of the subject called 'The Riva'? Did you ask to see the early states of Mr. Whistler's etchings?

Did you say to Mr. Brown 'Now, is not Mr. Whistler under an engagement with the Fine Art Society to publish no Venice etchings for a year,' or words to that effect? and upon Mr. Brown's assurance that such was the case, did you request him to go with you to the Hanover Gallery?

Did you there produce for his inspection three large Venice etchings, and among them the 'Riva' subject?

Did you then incite Mr. Brown to detect in these works the hand of Mr. Whistler?

Did you point out details of execution which, in your opinion, betrayed Mr. Whistler's manner?

Did you say, 'You see these etchings are signed Frank Duveneck, and I have written to that name and address for their purchase, but I don't believe in the existence of such a person,' or words to that effect?

If this be not so, why did you take Mr.

Brown over to the Hanover Gallery! Why did you show him Mr. Duveneck's Venice etchings?

Why did you question him about my engagement with the Fine Art Society!

Is it officially, as the Painter-Etcher's president, that you pry about the town?

Does the committee sanction your suggestions? and have you permitted yourself these 'proceedings' with the full knowledge and approval of the 'dozen or more distinguished men seated in serious council,' as described by yourself in the *Pall Mall Gazette?*

Of what nature, pray is the necessary duty that has led two medical men and a Slade Professor to fail as connoisseurs and blunder as detectives?

'Vat shall de honest man do in my closet? Dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet!'

Copies of this correspondence will be sent to members of your committee.

J. NcNeill Whistler.

Mar. 29th, 1881.

To this last characteristic letter, Mr. Seymour Haden has not as yet vouchsafed any answer, and here the matter rests. As requested, we have sent Mr. Piker the copies he requires for distribution.

The Cuckoo, Apr. 30, 1881.

F. SEYMOUR HADEN

WHO THE DEVIL DID THE PIKER PARTY DOUBT?

TO the Committee of the Painter-Etchers' Society: — Gentlemen, — I have hitherto, in vain, written to Sir William Drake, as Secretary of the Painter-Etchers' Society, and feeling convinced that his elaborate silence cannot possibly be the expression of any intended discourtesy on the part of the Committee, as a body, but that it would rather indicate that they had not been consulted in the matter at all, I now address myself to you, and beg that you will kindly inform me whether the Committee, as represented by their officers, endorse the late acts of their president, or whether they intend taking any steps towards refusing to share the shame and ridicule that have accrued from certain 'proceedings' described by Mr. Haden as a necessary duty, in the exercise of which he was officially engaged in conjunction with Dr. Hamilton and M. Legros.

That you may clearly see how current the matter has become, I have the honour, gentlemen, to send you herewith, for your serious consideration, extracts from the daily press, and thus, as you will read, carry out myself the

first intention of a certain speculative Piker, newsvendor, Shepherd's Market, who had purposed circulating among you twenty copies of the enclosed literary venture—curtailed, it is true, to the original 'Piker paragraph,' and unaccompanied by the Piker twenty-penny prospect; the printing of which may—who knows? —have caused a wavering on the part of Piker, and have left you deprived of his labour after all.

Piker offers matter with authority and here I would point out the *close proximity of Shepherd's Market to Hertford Street, Mayfair!*—most suggestive is such contiguity.

The newsvendor's stall and the doctor's study within hail of each other!

Surely I may, without indiscretion, congratulate the president upon Piker's English and also upon the Pecksniffian whine about the 'brother-in-law'.

Rather telling in its way—but shallow! shallow!—for after all, gentlemen, a brother-in-law is *not* a connection calling for sentiment— in the abstract, rather an intruder than 'a near relation'—indeed, 'near relation' is mere swagger!

Meanwhile, the insinuation of jealousy of the 'brother-etcher' is, as Piker puts it, '*suspecte*' —very! —and modest—and transparent!

To the last paper I have added the cutting from the former *Cuckoo* (Piker's earlier effort), so that you have the occasion of perceiving how

the progressive Piker party have gained in courage—until, in direct contradiction to their first anxiety and hesitation, we reach the final overwhelming certainty of the three representative gentlemen, whose visit to the Fine Art Society's rooms, it would now appear, was absolutely to prove to the 'blundering assistant' that some etchings he had never seen, and, consequently never questioned — of the very existence of which, in short, he was utterly unconscious — were by a Mr. Duveneck, of whom he had never heard, and *not* by Mr. Whistler! — a fact that in his whole life he had never been in a position to dispute — and of which the three *Painter-etchers* themselves were the only people who had ever had any doubt!

Really they either doubted Duveneck, or they didn't doubt Duveneck! Now, if the Piker party didn't doubt Duveneck, who the devil did the Piker party doubt? And why, may I ask, does Mr. Haden, *two days after* the disastrous blunder in Bond Street, *volunteer* the following note of explanation to Mr. Brown, the assistant?—

'To Ernest Brown, Esq.—Dear Sir,—We know all about Mr. Frank Duveneck, and are delighted to have his etchings. — Yours faithfully,

'F. Seymour Haden.'

38 Hertford-st, Mayfair, W., Mar. 19, 1881.

F. SEYMOUR HADEN

It will be remembered that the little expedition to the Fine Art Society's Gallery took place on *Thursday evening, the 17th* of March. On Friday, the 18th, Mr. Huish wrote to Mr. Haden demanding an explanation; and on *Saturday, the 19th*, this over-diplomatic and criminating note was sent to Mr. Brown,— altogether unasked for, and curiously difficult to excuse!

He doth protest too much!

Further comment I believe to be unnecessary.

I refer you, gentlemen, to my letter of March 20th, which Mr. Haden has never been able to answer—and merely point out that the 'blundering assistant' was the only one who did not blunder at all—since he alone refrained from folly, and, notwithstanding all exhortation, steadily refused, in the presence of cunning connoisseurs, to mistake the work of one man for that of another.

May I, without impertinence, ask what really does constitute the 'Painter-Etcher' 'all round,' as Piker has it? for, of these three gentlemen who have so markedly distinguished themselves in that character, two certainly are not painters—and one doesn't etch!

I have gentlemen, the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

J. McNeill Whistler.

May 18, 1881.

The Cuckoo, May, 1881.

AN UNMANAGEABLE TINT

'IN *re* J. McNeill Whistler. A petition for liquidation by arrangement has been filed by Mr. Whistler, artist.'—*Daily Paper.*

Of various 'arrangements' we've had an array—
Black and white, gold and silver, tawny and grey; but of all the 'arrangements' there yet remains one, and that's to arrange with the troublesome dun.

ATLAS.

The World, May 14, 1879.

ETCHINGS UNIMPORTANT IN SIZE

AT the Gallery of the Fine Art Society in New Bond Street, an exhibition has been opened of the etchings of Venice, executed by Mr. Whistler. Exhibitions are sometimes of slender constitution nowadays. Mr. Whistler's etchings are twelve in number, of unimportant dimensions, and of the slightest workmanship. They clearly proceed from a skilled hand, and convey a certain sense of distance and atmosphere, otherwise it cannot be said that they are of particular value or originality. They rather resemble vague first intentions, or memoranda for future use, than designs completely carried out. Probably every artist coming from Venice brings with him some such outlines as these in his sketch-books. Apparently, so far as his twelve etchings are to be considered as evidence in the matter, Venice has not deeply stirred either Mr. Whistler or his art.

The World, Dec. 8, 1880.

THE PRIVATE ASSASSIN YOU KEEP

ATLAS, *mon bon, méfiez-vous de vos gens !* Your art gentleman says that Mr. Whistler exhibits twelve etchings, 'slight in execution and unimportant in size.' Now the private assassin you keep for us need not be hampered by mere connoisseurship in the perpetration of his duty—therefore, *passé*, for the execution—but he should not compromise his master's reputation for brilliancy, and print things that he who runs may scoff at. Seriously, then, my Atlas, an etching does not depend for its importance upon its size. 'I am not arguing with you—I am telling you.' As well speak of one of you own charming *mots* as unimportant in length. Look to it, Atlas. Be severe with your man. Tell him his 'job' should be 'neatly done.' I could cut my own throat better; and if need be, in case of his dismissal, I offer my services. Meanwhile, yours joyously,

The World, Dec. 29, 1880.

SOME AMERICAN-ITALIAN

I HASTEN, with joy, to submit to you, dear Atlas, who are growing so very clever at your languages, the following crotchets and quavers — shall I call them? for Mr. Whistler is just now full of 'notes' — in American-Italian; they are from his delightful brownpaper catalogue. To begin with, 'Santa Margharita' is wrong; it must be either Margarita or Margherita — the other is impossible Italian. Then who or what is 'San Giovanni *Apostolo et Evangelistæ*'? Does the sprightly and shrill McNeill mean this for Latin? And is the Café 'Orientale' intended to be French or Italian? It has an *e* too many for French, and an *f* too few for Italian. 'Piazetta,' furthermore, does duty for 'Piazzetta.' Finally I give up 'Campo Sta. Martin.' I don't know what that can be. The Italian Calendar has a San Martino and a Santa Martina, but Sta. Martin is very curious. The catalogue is short, but a few of the names are right.

A CORRESPONDENT.

The World, Feb. 9, 1881.

AN ORTHOGRAPHER LOOSE

TOUCHÉ! — and my compliments to your 'correspondent,' Atlas *chéri* — far from me to justify spelling of my own! But who could possibly have supposed an orthographer loose! Evidently too 'ung vieulx qui a moult roulé en Palestine et aultres lieux!'

What it is to be prepared, though! Atlas, *mon pauvre ami*, you know the story of the witness who, when asked how far he stood from the spot where the deed was done, answered unhesitatingly, — 'Sixty-three feet seven inches!' 'How, sir,' cried the prosecuting lawyer, 'how can you possibly pretend to such accuracy?' 'Well,' returned the man in the box, 'you see, I thought some d——d fool would be sure to ask me, and so I measured.'

The World, Feb. 16, 1881.

UNKIND TO THE ARISTOCRACY

NO Birmingham election, no Chamberlain speech, no *Reynolds* or *Dispatch* article, could bring the aristocracy more strongly into ridicule and contempt than does the coarsely coloured cartoon of 'Newmarket' accompanying the winter number of *Vanity Fair*. From it one learns that the Prince of Wales, and the Dukes, Duchesses, and turf persons generally, frequenting the Heath, are a set of blob-headed stumpy dwarfs, mostly Jews.

ATLAS.

The World, Dec. 9, 1885.

A TRIBUTE TO PELLEGRINI

I AGREE with you, O Atlas of ages, that completeness is a reason for ceasing to exist; but even indignation might be less vague than is your righteous anger at *Vanity's* Christmas cartoon. Surely you might have helped the people, who scarcely distinguish between the original and impudent imitation, to know that this faded leaf is not from the book of Carlo Pellegrini, the master who has taught them all —what they can never learn?

The World, Dec. 16, 1885.

THE FIRST OIL PORTRAIT OF MR. RUSKIN!

CLOSE to this is another portrait of extreme interest, and, though of another kind, it is not inappropriately near Mr. Hunt's work. This is Mr. John Ruskin, painted by Mr. Herkomer. It is difficult to dissociate this picture, as regards the merit of its painting, from the interest which attaches to it as being the first oil portrait we have ever seen of our great art critic. We are inclined to dwell rather upon the face itself, upon its shrewd kindliness, its underlying scorn, and the slightly visionary expression in the bright blue eyes. The one observation which will, probably, occur to most of those who know Mr. Ruskin, on seeing this portrait of him, will be that all the features have been a little slurred over by the artist. However, when all deduction is made for this and for a certain lifelessness of colour, which is rather to be felt than described, the picture remains a singularly fine one, and is, in our opinion, Mr. Herkomer's best portrait.

HARRY QUILTER.

The Times, May 2, 1881.

WAFTED IN AT THE GROSVENOR

NE pas confondre intelligence avec gendarmes — but surely, dear Atlas, when the art critic of the *Times*, suffering possibly from chronic catarrh, is wafted in at the Grosvenor without guide or compass, and cannot by mere sense of smell distinguish between oil and water colour, he ought, like Mark Twain, 'to inquire.'

Had he asked the guardian or the fireman in the gallery, either might have told him not to say that one of the chief interests of Mr. Herkomers's large water-colour drawing of Mr. Ruskin 'attaches to it as being *the first oil portrait* we have ever seen of our great art critic'! Adieu.

The World, May 18, 1881.

HARRY QUILTER

A NEW FACE IN THE WHITE HOUSE

MY dear James, I see from a weekly paper that your late residence, the White House, in Tite Street, is now occupied by Mr. Harry Quilter, 'the excellent art critic and writer on art,' or words to that effect. This is the great man who has succeeded Mr. Tom Taylor on the *Times*, and whose vagaries in art criticism you and I, my dear James, have previously noticed. . .

ATLAS.

The World, June 1, 1881.

AN 'ARRANGEMENT' IN MUSTARD AND CRESS

IN spite of the Kyrle Society, I don't appeal to the middle classes; for I read in the *Times* that 'Arry won't have me. I am ranked with the *caviare* of his betters, and add not to the relish of his winkles and tea. Also, why troubles he about many things?

But, alas! as is aptly remarked in one of the weekly papers, 'Arry has taken to going to the Grosvenor;' and 'ce n'est pas tout que d'être honète,' he says lightly, paraphrasing Alfred de Musset, 'il faut être joli garçon.'

And so he blooms into an æsthete of his own order. To have seen him, O my wise Atlas, was my privilege and my misery, for he stood under one of my own 'harmonies'—already with difficulty gasping its gentle breath—himself an amazing 'arrangement' in strong mustard and cress, with bird's-eye belcher of Reckitt's blue; and then and there destroyed absolutely, unintentionally, and once for all, my year's work.

Atlas, shall these things be?

The World, May 17, 1882.

POSTHUMOUS PHILISTINISM

O ATLAS ! What of the ' Society for the Preservation of Beautiful Buildings ? '

Where *is* Ruskin ? and what do Morris and Sir William Drake ?

For, behold ! beside the Thames the work of desecration continues, and the ' White House ' swarms with the mason of contract.

The architectural *galbe* that was the joy of the few and the bedazement of ' the Board, ' crumbles beneath the pick (as did the north side of St. Mark's), and History is wiped from the face of Chelsea.

Shall no one interfere ? Shall the interloper, even after his death, prevail ?

Shall 'Arry, whom I have hewn down, still live among us by outrage of this kind, and impose his memory upon our pavement by the public perpetration of his posthumous philistinism ?

Shall the birthplace of art become the tomb of its parasite in Tite Street ?

See to it, Atlas ! lest, when Time, the healer of all the wounds I have inflicted, shall for me have exacted those honours the prophet may not expect while alive, and the inevitable

blue disc imbedded in the walls, shall proclaim that 'Here once dwelt' the gentle master of all that is flippant and fine in art, some anxious student, reading, fall out with Providence in his vain effort to reconcile such joyous reputation with the dank and hopeless appearance of this 'model lodging,' bequeathed to the people by the arrogance of 'Arry.

The World, Oct. 17, 1883.

A NEW INSTRUMENT OF TORTURE

MR. WHISTLER'S last Sunday breakfast of the year was given in honour of two happy couples, Lord Garmoyle and his fairy queen, and Oscar and the lady whom he has chosen to be the *châtelaine* of the House Beautiful. The hospitable master has fresh wonders in store for his friends in the new year; for, not content with treating his next-door critic after the manner that Portuguese sailors treat the Apostle Judas at Easter-tide, he is said to have perfected a new instrument of torture. This invention is of the nature of a camera obscura, whereby, by a crafty 'arrangement' of reflectors, he promises to display in his own studio to his friends ''Arry at the White House,' under all the appropriate circumstances that might be expected of a 'Celebrity at Home.'

ATLAS.

The World, Dec. 26, 1883.

CRUELTY TO THE CRITIC AFTER DEMISE

DELIGHTFUL! Atlas,—I have read here, to the idle miners, culture in their manners curiously, at this season, blended with intoxication, your brilliant and graphic description of 'Arry at the other end of my arrangement in telescopic lenses. The sensitive sons of the Cornish caves, by instinct refined, revel in the writhing of the resurrected 'Arry. Our natures are evidently of the same dainty brutality. Cruelty to the critic after demise is a revelation, and the story of 'Arry pursued with post-mortem, and, for Sunday demonstration, kept by galvanism from his grave, is to them most fascinating. I have, my sympathetic Atlas, the success that might have been Edgar Poe's, could he have read to such an audience the horrible 'Case of Mr. Waldemar.' My invention and machinery, by the way, these warm-hearted people believe to be something after the fashion of their own sluice-boxes—and I dare not undeceive them.

St. Ives, Cornwall, Dec. 27, 1883.

The World, Jan. 4, 1882.

FOND OF POT-SHOTS AT THINGS

THEY have sent me the *Spectator*—a paper upon which our late 'Arry lingered to the last as art critic. In its columns I find a correspondent calling aloud for our kind intervention. Present me, brave Atlas, to the editor, that I may say to him:

'Good sir,—'Your Reviewer' is doubtless my unburied 'Arry. Why, then, should 'his mistaking a photogravure reproduction of a pen-and-ink drawing by Samuel Palmer for a finished etching by the same hand' seem, 'to say the least of it, astounding'? Not at all! By this sort of thing was he known among us, poor chap—and so was he our fresh gladness and continued surprise.

'Did I not make historical his enchanting encounter with Mr. Herkomer's water-colour drawing of Mr. Ruskin at the Grosvenor, which he described as the 'first oil portrait we have ever seen of the great art critic'?

'Amazing that, if you like!

'Do not all remember how we leaped for joy at the reading of it? Even Atlas himself laughed aloud, and, handicapped as he

is with the world and weighted with wisdom, danced, upon his plinth, a slow measure of reckless acquiescence, as I set down in the chronicles of all time that 'Arry, 'unable, by mere sense of smell, to distinguish between oil and water-colour might at least have inquired; and that either the fireman or the guardian in the Gallery could have told him not to blunder in the *Times*.'

'But no, he never would ask—he liked his pot-shots at things; it used to give a sort of sporting interest to his speculations upon pictures. And so he was ever obstinate—or any one at the Fine Art Society would have told him the difference between an etching, and a photograph.—I am, good sir, yours, etc.'

Atlas, *à bientôt*.

St. Ives, Cornwall, Jan. 25, 1884.
The World, Jan. 30, 1884.

THE AGE OF TESTIMONIALS

PLEASE to take note, my dear Mr. James McN. W., that your 'dearest foe,' 'Arry, is a candidate for the Slade Chair of Art in the University of Cambridge! This is said to be the age of testimonials. A few words from you, my dear James, addressed to the distinguished trustees, after the manner of your 'Ten o'Clock,' with which you recently so delighted the connoisseurs of the Cam., could not fail to give 'Arry a lift. His competitors are, I hear, likely to be but a sorry lot. What say you, my dear James? 'Why don't you speak for yourself, sir?'

ATLAS.

The World, Feb. 17, 1884.

HARRY QUILTER

AVENGING THE BEAUTIFUL

ATLAS, you provoke me! The wisdom of ages means but little — I have said it. *Faut être dans le mouvement*, you dear old thing, or you are absolutely out of it!

You are misled, and mistake mere fact for the fiction of history, which is truth—and instructs—and is beautiful.

Now, in truth, 'Arry is dead—very dead.

Did I not from between your shoulders sally forth and slay him? — thereby instructing—and making history—and avenging the beautiful.

If within the distant Aïden, you can't descry, 'with sorrow laden,' the tiny soul of 'Arry, it is because you no longer read your own small print, my Atlas! and the microbes of Eternity escape you.

Moreover, are not these things written in the chronicles of Chelsea, adown whose Embankment I still, Achilles-like, do drag the body of an afternoon?

This practice has doubtless completed the confusion of the wearied ones of Slade — and they of the Schools, accustomed to the culture of Colvin, whose polished scalp I with difficulty

collected, ceasing to distinguish between the quick and the dead, will probably prop up our late 'Arry as professor, long to remain undetected in the Chair!

Atlas, *tais-toi!* — Let us not interfere!

The World, Feb. 24, 1884.

HARRY QUILTER

A CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER

I HAVE come upon the posthumous paper of 'Arry — his certificate of character, and printed pretension to the Professorship of Slade—and O! the shame of it and the indiscretion of it!

Read, Atlas, and seek in your past for a parallel:

'To the Electors of the Slade Professor of 'Fine Art for the University of Cambridge. — 'My Lord and Gentlemen, — I beg to submit my 'name as a candidate for the Slade Professorship, 'and enclose herewith a few testimonials. . . I 'have also received favourable letters from the 'following . . . Alma-Tadema, R.A., Marcus Stone, 'R. A, Briton Riviere, R. A., John Brett, 'A. R. A. . . and others.'

What! Is the Immaculate impure? and shall the Academy have coquetted with the unclean?

Had Alma the classic aught in common with this 'Arry of commerce?

Believe him not, Atlas!

O Alma! O Ichabod! forgive us the thought of it!

Surely also the pots of 'the Forty' do boil before the Lord, and the flames of the chosen were unfanned by the feather of 'Arry's goose-quill.

Again:

'My experience in art matters has been briefly 'as follows:

'I have worked at the subject continually in 'Italy, having for that purpose travelled and stayed 'in that country — at least a dozen times. I have 'also painted in France, Germany, and Bel-'gium, in which last-mentioned country I was 'in a portrait painter's studio.' (A portrait by 'Arry!)

'There are several pictures of mine being 'exhibited in London at the present time.' (! ! !)

'I have also executed a good deal of dis-'temper. . .

'I have also travelled for a year in the East.' ('Arry in the East! !)

'I have had, as a lecturer upon art, consider-'able experience — at working men's clubs — . . . 'and at the Rev. Stopford A. Brook's College 'for men, women, and children.

'For the last ten years I have written *every* '*article upon art* which has appeared in the '*Spectator* newspaper.' — (A confession, Atlas, clearly a confession!)

'In 1880 I wrote a critical life of Giotto' — (He did indeed, Atlas. I saw it — a book in blue —

his own, and Reckitt's — all bold with brazen letters :

GIOTTO, BY 'ARRY.)

' of which two editions were published ' — (bless him — and then I killed him!)

And ' I am, Gentlemen,

' Your most obedient servant,

' 'ARRY, M.A.,

' Trin. Coll., Camb., Esquire.'

The pride of it!

The World, Mar. 24, 1886.

TO MR. WILDE IN AMERICA

THE following letter, containing a *résumé* of the situation, has been despatched to Oscar Wilde :

OSCAR, — We, of Tite Street and Beaufort Gardens, joy in your triumphs and delight in your success ; but we are of the opinion that, with the exception of your epigrams, you talk like ' S —— C —— in the provinces ' ; and that, with the exception of your knee-breeches, you dress like 'Arry Quilter.

The World, Feb. 15, 1882.

DISGUISED IN CAREFUL TIMIDITY

ATLAS, how could you ! I know you carry the *World* on your back, and am not surprised that my note to Oscar, on its way, should have fallen from your shoulders into your dainty fingers ; but why present it in the state of puzzle ?

Besides, your caution is one-sided and unfair ; for if you print S—— C——, why not A—— Q—— ? Why not X Y Z at once ?

And how unlike me ! Instead of the recklessness which has unfortunately become a characteristic, I am for the first time disguised in careful timidity, and discharge my insinuating initials from the ambush of innuendo.

My dear Atlas, if I may not always call a spade a spade, may I not call a Slade Professor Sydney Colvin ?

The World, Feb. 22, 1882.

A SLIGHT CORRECTION

A SUPPOSITITIOUS conversation in *Punch* brought about the following interchange of telegrams :

From Oscar Wilde, Exeter, to J. McNeill Whistler, Tite Street. — *Punch* too ridiculous — when you and I are together we never talk about anything except *ourselves*.

From Whistler, Tite Street, to Oscar Wilde, Exeter. — No, no, Oscar, you forget — when you and I are together, we never talk about anything except *me*.

The World, Nov. 14, 1883.

KNEE PLUSH ULTRA

FROM a letter to the late Mr. Godwin, an authority on costume :

I hear you have been dressing our Oscar in plush ! — why ?

That, I thought, ceased with the breeches — you know :

' Knee plush ultra ! '

The World, Oct. 17, 1884.

THE POET THE SUPREME ARTIST

LAST night, at Prince's Hall, Mr. Whistler made his first public appearance as a lecturer on Art. . . There were some arrows, barbed and brilliant, shot off. . . and (*O mea culpa*!) at dress reformers most of all. . . That an artist will find beauty in ugliness, *le beau dans l'horrible*, is now a commonplace of the schools. . . the poet is the supreme artist, for he is the master of colour and of form, and the real musician besides, and is lord over all life and all arts; and so to the poet above all others are these mysteries known; to Edgar Allan Poe and to Baudelaire, not to Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche. . .

OSCAR WILDE.

The Pall Mall Gazette, Feb. 21, 1885.

THE NAÏVETÉ OF THE POET

OSCAR,—I have read your exquisite article in the *Pall Mall*. Nothing is more delicate, in the flattery of 'the Poet' to 'the Painter,' than the *naïveté* of 'the Poet,' in the choice of his Painters—Banjamin West and Paul Delaroche!

You have pointed out that 'the Painter's' mission is to find '*le beau dans l'horrible,*' and have left to 'the Poet' the discovery of '*l'horrible*' *dans* '*le beau*'!

The World, Feb. 25, 1885.

TO BE GREAT IS TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD

DEAR Butterfly,—By the aid of a biographical dictionary, I made the discovery that there were once two painters, called Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche, who rashly lectured upon Art. As of their works nothing at all remains, I conclude that they explained themselves away.

Be warned in time, James; and remain, as I do, incomprehensible. To be great is to be misunderstood. – *Tout à vous*,

OSCAR WILDE.

The World, Feb. 25, 1885.

THE COURAGE OF THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS

GENTLEMEN, — I am naturally interested in any effort made among Painters to prove that they are alive — but when I find, thrust in the van ot your leaders, the body of my dead 'Arry, I know that putrefaction alone can result. When, following 'Arry, there comes on Oscar, you finish in farce, and bring upon yourselves the scorn and ridicule of your *confrères* in Europe.

What has Oscar in common with Art? except that he dines at our tables and picks from our platters the plums for the pudding he peddles in the provinces. Oscar — the amiable, irresponsible, esurient Oscar — with no more sense of a picture than of the fit of a coat, has the courage of the opinions — of others!

With 'Arry and Oscar you have avenged the Academy.

I am, Gentlemen, yours obediently,

J. McNeill Whistler.

The World, Nov. 17, 1888. To the National Art Exhibition, an organisation opposed to the Royal Academy.

VULGARITY BEGINS AT HOME *

ATLAS, this is very sad! With our James, vulgarity begins at home, and should be allowed to stay there. — *A vous*,

OSCAR WILDE.

The World, Nov. 24, 1886.

* Later, in an article on 'The Decay of Lying' in the *Nineteenth Century*, Mr. Wilde quoted Mr. Whistler's attack as an instance in point *re* the truth of the theory that mendacity as a fine art has declined since the days of Macchiavelli.

NOBLE GENEROSITY !

AMONG your ruthless exposures of the shams of to-day, nothing, I confess, have I enjoyed with keener relish than your late tilt at that arch-impostor and pest of the period—the all-pervading plagiarist !

I learn, by the way, that in America he may, under the 'Law of '84,' as it is called, be criminally prosecuted, incarcerated, and made to pick oakum, as he has hitherto picked brains—and pockets !

How was it that, in your list of culprits, you omitted that fattest of offenders—our own Oscar ?

His methods are brought again freshly to my mind, by the indefatigable and tardy Romeike, who sends me newspaper cuttings of 'Mr. Vivian's Reminiscences,' in which, among other entertaining anecdotes, is told at length, the story of Oscar simulating the becoming pride of author, upon a certain evening, in the club of the Academy students, and arrogating to himself the responsibility of the lecture, with which, at his earnest prayer, I had, in good fellowship, cram-

med him, that he might not add deplorable failure to foolish appearance, in his anomalous position as art expounder, before his clear-headed audience.

He went forth, on that occasion, as my St. John—but, forgetting that humility should be his chief characteristic, and unable to withstand the unaccustomed respect with which his utterances were received, he not only trifled with my shoe, but bolted with the latchet!

Mr. Vivian, in his book, tells us, further on, that lately, in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* on the 'Decay of Lying,' Mr. Wilde has deliberately and incautiously incorporated, 'without a word of comment' a portion of the well-remembered letter in which, after admitting his rare appreciation and amazing memory, I acknowledge that 'Oscar has the courage of the opinions. ... of others!'

My recognition of this, his latest proof of open admiration, I send him in the following little note, which I fancy you may think àpropos to publish, as an example to your readers, in similar circumstances, of noble generosity in sweet reproof, tempered, as it should be, to the lamb in his condition:—

'Oscar, you have been down the area again, I see!

'I had forgotten you, and so allowed your hair to grow over the sore place. And now, while I looked the other way, you have stolen *your own scalp!* and potted it in more of your pudding.

Labby has pointed out that, for the detected plagiarist, there is still one way to self-respect (besides hanging himself, of course), and that is for him boldly to declare. 'Je prends mon bien là où je le trouve.' You, Oscar, can go further, and with fresh effrontery, that will bring you the envy of all criminal *confrères*, unblushingly boast, 'Moi, je prends *son* bien là où je le trouve!'

Truth, Jan 2, 1890.

THE LIE DIRECT

I CAN hardly imagine that the public are in the very smallest degree interested in the shrill shrieks of ' Plagiarism ' that proceed from time to time out of the lips of silly vanity or incompetent mediocrity.

However, as Mr. James Whistler has had the impertinence to attack me with both venom and vulgarity in your columns, I hope you will allow me to state that the assertions contained in his letter are as deliberately untrue as they are deliberately offensive.

The definition of a disciple as one who has the courage of the opinions of his master is really too old even for Mr. Whistler to be allowed to claim it, and as for borrowing Mr. Whistler's ideas about art, the only thoroughly original ideas I have ever heard him express have had reference to his own superiority as a painter over painters greater than himself.

It is a trouble for any gentleman to have to notice the lucubrations of so ill-bred and ignorant a person as Mr. Whistler, but your publication of his insolent letter left me no option in the matter. — I remain, Sir, faithfully yours,

Oscar Wilde.

Truth, Jan. 9, 1890.

THE TASK IS LEFT TO 'TRUTH'

COWED and humiliated, I acknowledge that our Oscar is at last original. At bay, and sublime in his agony, he certainly has, for once, borrowed from no living author, and comes out in his own true colours — as his own 'gentleman.'

How shall I stand against his just anger, and his damning allegations! for it must be clear to your readers, that, beside his clean polish, as prettily set forth in his epistle, I, alas! am but the 'ill-bred and ignorant person,' whose 'lucubrations' 'it is a trouble' for him 'to notice.'

Still will I, desperate as is my condition, point out that though 'impertinent', 'venomous,' and 'vulgar,' he claims me as his 'master' — and, in the dock, bases his innocence upon such relation between us.

In all humility, therefore, I admit that the outcome of my 'silly vanity and incompetent mediocrity,' must be the incarnation : Oscar Wilde. *Mea culpa!* the gods may perhaps forgive and forget.

To you, 'TRUTH' — champion of the truth — I leave the brave task of proclaiming again that the story of the lecture to the students of the Royal Academy was, as I told it to you, no fiction.

In the presence of Mr. Waldo Story did Oscar make his prayer for preparation; and at his table was he entrusted with the materials for his crime.

You also shall again unearth, in the *Nineteenth Century Review* of Jan., 89, page 37, the other appropriated property, slily stowed away, in an article on 'The Decay of Lying' — though why Decay!

To shirk this matter thus is craven, doubtless; but I am awestricken and tremble, for truly 'the rage of the sheep is terrible!'

Truth, Jan. 16, 1890.

ONE OF THE WOUNDED

THERE are those, they tell me, who have the approval of the people—and live! For them the *succès d'estime;* for me, O Atlas, the *succès d'exécration*—the only tribute possible from the Mob to the Master.

This I have now nobly archieved. *Glissons!*

In the hour of my triumph let me not neglect my ambulance.

Mr. Frederick Wedmore—a critic—one of the wounded—complains that by dexterously substituting 'understand' for 'understate,' I have dealt unfairly by him, and wrongly rendered his writing.*

Let me hasten to acknowledge the error, and apologise.

My carelessness is culpable, and the misprint without excuse; for naturally I have all along known, and the typographer should have been duly warned, that with Mr. Wedmore, as with his brethren, it is always a matter of understating, and not at all of understanding.

Quant aux autres—well, with the exception

* Catalogue of the Second Exhibition of Venice Etchings, *Mr. Whistler and his Critics.*

of 'Arry, who really is dead, they will recover. Scalped and disfigured, they are not mortally hurt; and—would you believe it?—possessed with an infinite capacity for continuing, they have already returned, nothing doubting, to their limited literature, of which I have exhausted the stock.—Yours, *en passant*,

The World, Feb. 28, 1883.

VAL. PRINSEP, A.R.A.

THE ACADEMY IS WITHOUT STAIN

ATLAS, look at this! It has been culled from the 'Plumber and Decorator,' of all insidious prints, and forwarded to me by the untiring people who daily supply me with the thinkings of my critics.

Read, Atlas, and let me execute myself:

'The 'Peacock' drawing-room of Thomas Leyland, Esq., shipowner, of Liverpool, at Queen's Gate, London, is hand-painted, representing the noble bird with wings expanded, painted by Mr. Val Prinsep, an Associate of the Royal Academy, at a cost of £7,000, and fortunate in claiming Mr. Leyland's daughter as his bride. It is one of the finest specimens of high art decoration in the kingdom. The mansion is of modern construction.'

He is not guilty, this honest Associate!

It was *I*, Atlas, who did this thing — '*I* alone did it' — *I* 'hand-painted' this room in the 'mansion of modern construction.'

Woe is me!

I secreted, in the provincial shipowner's home, 'the noble bird with wings expanded' — *I* perpetrated, in harmless obscurity, 'the finest

specimen of high art decoration' — and the Academy is without stain in the art of its member.

Also the immaculate character of that Royal body has been falsely impugned by this wicked 'Plumber'!

Mark these things, Atlas, that justice may be done, the innocent spared, and history cleanly written.

Bonsoir!

The World, Dec. 31, 1884.

J. C. HORSLEY, R. A.

THE INHARMONIOUS NUDE

IF pictures or statues of naked women are to be executed, living naked women must be employed as models. If those who talk and write so glibly as to the desirability of artists devoting themselves to the representation of naked human form, only knew a tithe of the degradation enacted before the model is sufficiently hardened to her shameful calling, they would for ever hold their tongues and pens in supporting the practice. Is not clothedness (sic. Ed.) a distinct type and feature of our Christian faith? All art representations of nakedness are out of harmony with it.

J. C. HORSLEY, R. A.

From a Lecture before the Church Congress, Oct. 7, 1885.

J. C. HORSLEY, R. A.

HORSLEY *SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE*

MR. WHISTLER is again, in a sense, the mainstay of the Society (British Artists), partly through his own individuality and partly through the innovations he has introduced. His most important work is the 'Arrangement in Black: Portrait of Mrs. Cassatt'—a countrywoman of his own . . . He also has several oil and pastel pictures, very slight in themselves, of the female nude, dignified and graceful in line and charmingly chaste, entitled 'Harmony,' 'Caprice,' and 'Note.' Beneath the latter Mr. Whistler has written, 'Horsley *soit qui mal y pense*.'

'This is not,' said the artist, 'what people are sure to call it, 'Whistler's little joke.' On the contrary, it is an indignant protest against the idea that there is any immorality in the nude'.

The Pall Mall Gazette, Dec. 8, 1885.

J. C. HORSLEY, R. A.

THE UNSEEMLINESS OF SENILITY

NO kind sir — *trop de zèle* on the part of your representative — for I surely never explain, and Art certainly requires no 'indignant protest' against the unseemliness of senility. 'Horsley *soit qui mal y pense*' is meanwhile a sweet sentiment — why more — and why 'morality'?

The Pall Mall Gazette, Dec. 10, 1885.

RECEIVED WITH HISSES

IN your report of the Graham sale of pictures at Messrs. Christie and Manson's rooms, I read the following:—

'The next work put upon the easel was a 'Nocturne in blue and silver,' by J. M. Whistler. It was received with hisses.'

May I beg, through your widely spread paper, to acknowledge the distinguished, though I fear unconscious, compliment so publicly paid.

It is rare that recognition so complete is made during the lifetime of the painter, and I would wish to have recorded my full sense of this flattering exception in my favour.

The Observer, April 11, 1886.

FLESH TONES IN NATURE AND ON CANVAS

THE notion that I paint flesh lower in tone than it is in nature is entirely based upon the popular superstition as to what flesh really is—when seen on canvas; for the people never look at nature with any sense of its pictorial appearance—for which reason, by the way, they also never look at a picture with any sense of nature, but, unconsciously from habit, with reference to what they have seen in other pictures.

Now in the usual 'pictures of the year' there is but one flesh, that shall do service under all circumstances, whether the person painted be in the soft light of the room or out in the glare of the open. The one aim of the unsuspecting painter is to make his man 'stand out' from the frame—never doubting that, on the contrary, he should really, and in truth absolutely does, stand *within* the frame—and at a depth behind it equal to the distance at which the painter sees his model. The frame is, indeed, the window through which the painter looks at his model, and nothing could be more offensively inartistic than this bru-

tal attempt to thrust the model on the hitherside of this window!

Yet this is the false condition of things to which all have become accustomed, and in the stupendous effort to bring it about, exaggeration has been exhausted—and the traditional means of the incompetent can no further go.

Lights have been heightened, until the white of the tube alone remains—shadows have been deepened until black alone is left. Scarcely a feature stays in its place, so fierce is its intention of 'firmly' coming forth; and in the midst of this unseemly struggle for prominence, the gentle truth has but a sorry chance, falling flat and flavourless, and without force.

Whereas, could the people be induced to turn their eyes but for a moment, with the fresh power of comparison, upon their fellow creatures as they pass in the gallery, they might be made dimly to perceive though I doubt it, so blind is their belief in the bad) how little they resemble the impudent images on the walls! how 'quiet' in coelour they are! how 'grey!' how 'low in tone.' And then it might be explained to their riveted intelligence how they had mistaken meretriciousness for mastery, and by what mean methods the imposture had been practised upon them.

The Court Review, July 1, 1886.

THE SNOBS OF THE LITERARY PROFESSION

THE *Saturday Review* has not thought it disgraceful to once more jnstify its title to be called the 'Saturday Reviler.' This time it is not to break upon the wheel some poor butterfly of a lady traveller or novelist, but to scoff at an aged painter of the highest repute—Mr. Herbert—upon his retirement to the rank of 'Honorary Academician,' after a career such as few, if any, painters living can boast. This it pleases the 'Reviler' to congratulate artists upon as 'good news,' without a word or a thought of what the retiring Academician has done in art, except to utter the contemptible untruth that 'his resignation means that he has found out that he is beaten,' *not* by the natural failing of old age, but because he failed to impress such a writer as this with the special exhibition of the works of his long life, that was made some few years back to mark the completion of his last great picture for the House of Lords, 'The Judgment of Daniel.' That exhibition, which most people, who know anything about painting in its highest style of religious and monumental art, thought a most

interesting display of a painter's career, is described by this most genial of critics as 'acres of pallid purple canvases, with wizened saints and virgins in attitudinizing groups.'

Whether that collection of Mr. Herbert's works had merit or not is matter of opinion which I am not concerned to dispute; but, as a matter of fact, there were only *three* small pictures in which the Virgin or any saints appeared; the other pictures, besides the two large works of 'The Delivery of the Law' and 'The Judgment of Daniel,' painted for the nation, being historical subjects . . .

But the 'Saturday's' art critic, if he ever saw this exhibition at all, didn't go to see these pictures. As Goethe says, 'the eye sees what it came to see,' and he went to see the 'acres of purple canvases, with their wizened saints,' which were not there. No matter—it suits his purpose to declare that they were, just as it does to cram into a paragraph more ignorance, insolence, and false assertions combined than is often to be met with even in this locality of literature, where the editor seems to be surrounded with all the prigs, and the pumps, and the snobs of the literary profession.

HENRY LABOUCHERE.

Truth, Aug. 19, 1886.

HENRY LABOUCHERE

THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS OF ART

HOITY-TOITY! my dear Henry —, what is all this? How can you startle the 'Constant Reader' of this cold world by these sudden dashes into the unexpected?

Perceive also what happens.

Sweet in the security of my own sense of things, and looking upon you surely as the typical '*Sapem*' of modern progress and civilization, here do I, in full Paris, *à l'heure de l'absinthe*, upon mischievous discussion intent, call aloud for *Truth*.

'*Vous allez voir*,' I say to the brilliant brethren gathered about my table; 'you shall hear the latest beautiful thing and bold said by our great Henry — '*capable de tout*,' beside whom '*ce coquin d'Habacuc*' was mild indeed and usual!' And straightway to my stultification, I find myself translating paragraphs of pathos and indignation, in which a colourless old gentleman of the Academy is sympathised with and made a doddering hero of, for no better reason than that he *is* old — and those who would point out the wisdom and comfort of his withdrawal into the wigwam of private

life, sternly reproved and anathematised and threatened with shame — until they might well expect to find themselves come upon by the bears of the aged and irascible, though baldheaded, Prophet whom the children had thoughtfully urged to 'go up.'

Fancy the Frenchmen's astonishment as I read, and their placid amusement as I attempted to point out that it was 'meant drolly — that *enfin* you were a *mystificateur*!'

Henry, why should I thus be mortified? Also, why this new *pose*, this cheap companionship of senility?

How, in the name of all that is incompetent, do you find much virtue in work spreading over more time! What means this affectation of *naïveté*.

We all know that work excuses itself only by reason of its quality.

If the work is foolish, it surely is not less foolish because an honest and misspent lifetime has been passed in producing it.

What matters it that the offending worker has grown old among us, and has endeared himself to many by his caprices as ratepayer and neighbour?

Personally, he may have claims upon his surroundings; but, as the painter of poor pictures, he is damned for ever.

You see, my Henry, that it is not sufficient to be as you are in wit and wisdom, among us, amazing and astute; a very Daniel in your

judgment of many vexed questions ; of a frankness and loyalty withal in your crusade against abuses, that makes of the keen litigator a most dangerous Quixote.

This peculiar temperament gives you that superb sense of right, *outside the realm of art,* that amounts to genius, and carries with it continued success and triumph in the warfare you wage.

But here it helps you not. And so you find yourself, for instance, pleasantly prattling in print of ' English Art. '

Learn, then, O ! Henry, that there is no such thing as English art. You might as well talk of English mathematics. Art is art and mathematics is mathematics.

What you call English art is not art at all, but produce, of which there is, and always has been, and always will be, a plenty, whether the men producing it are dead and called —— or (I refer you to your own selection — far be it for me to choose) — or alive and called ——, whosoever you like as you turn over the Academy catalogue.

The great truth you have to understand is that it matters not at all whom you prefer in this long list. They all belong to the excellent army of mediocrity ; the differences between them being infinitely small — mere microscopic — as compared to the vast distance between any one of them and the great.

They are the commercial travellers of Art, whose

works are their wares, and whose exchange is the Academy. They pass and are forgotten, or remain for a while in the memory of the worthies who knew them, and who cling to their faith in them, as it flatters their own place in history—famous themselves—the friends of the famous!

Speak of them, if it please you, with uncovered head—even as in France you would remove your hat as there passes by the hearse—but remember it is from the conventional habit of awe alone, this show of respect, and called forth generally by the casual corpse of the commonest kind.

Paris, Aug. 21, 1886.

Truth, Sept. 2, 1886.

APPRECIATION WRAPPED IN GRACEFUL COMPLIMENT

WHEN I suggested you as the 'Sapeur of modern progress,' my dear Henry, I thought to convey delicately my appreciation, wrapped in graceful compliment.

When I am made to say that you are the 'Sapem' of civilization—whatever that may mean—I would seem to insinuate an impertinence clothed in classic error.

I trust that, if you forgive me, you will never pardon the printer. Always,

Truth, Sept. 9, 1886.

A TRANS-ATLANTIC MIRAGE

ONE CANNOT CONTINUALLY DISAPPOINT A CONTINENT

QUITE true — now that it is established as an improbability, it becomes true.

They tell me that December has been fixed upon, by the Fates, for my arrival in New York — and, if I escape the Atlantic, I am to be wrecked by the reporter on the pier.

I shall be in his hands, even as is the sheep in the hands of his shearer — for I have learned nothing from those who have gone before — and been lost too!

What will you! I know Matthew Arnold, and am told that he whispered Truth exquisite unheeded in the haste of America.

And these others who have crossed the seas, that they might fasten upon the hurried ones at home and gird at them with wisdom, hysterically acquired, and administered, unblushingly, with a suddenness of purpose that prevented their ever being listened to here, — must I follow in their wake, to be met with suspicion by my compatriots, and resented as the invading instructor?

Heavens! — who knows! — also in the papers, where naturally I read only of myself, I gather

a general impression of offensive agressiveness, that, coupled with Chase's monstrous lampoon, has prepared me for the tomahawk on landing.

How dared he, Chase, do this wicked thing! — and I who was charming, and made him beautiful on canvas — the Masher of the Avenues.

However, I may not put off until the age of the amateur has gone by, but am to take with me some of those works which have won for me the execration of Europe, that they may be shown to a country in which I cannot be a prophet, and where I, who have no intention of being other than joyous — improving no one — not even myself — will say again my 'Ten o'Clock,' which I refused to repeat in London — *J'ai dit!*

This is no time for hesitation — one cannot continually disappoint a Continent!

The World, Oct 15, 1886.

A TRANS-ATLANTIC MIRAGE

THE JOY OF ANTAGONISM

I ASKED Mr. Whistler one day if he expected to take any of his pictures to America.

'I don't know,' he said; 'they will not allow me to take them across the ocean. You see, I don't own my pictures. I sold most of them long ago to people who think more of them than they do of me. I wrote and asked for two or three of them to take over, and the answers I received were to the effect that I could have them to exhibit here, but not to exhibit in America.'

'Why?' 'Because the owners are afraid of the ocean. I said I would insure the pictures, at which of course they laughed. I may go and I may not. A good many people in America don't like me, and I am not there to fight them as I can fight my enemies here. I don't mind having enemies where I can get at them. I like the pleasure of whipping them; but these fellows in America have it all their own way. There is no record, and I am at a constant disadvantage.'

The World, Dec. 27, 1886.

A CONSUMMATE SENSE OF OPPORTUNITY

IN your courageous crusade against the Demon Dulness and his preposterous surroundings, I think it well that there should be delivered into your hands certain documents for immediate publication, that your readers may be roused quickly, and hear again how well fenced in are the foolish in strong places—and how greatly to be desired is their exposure, discomfiture, and death—that Truth may prevail.

It happened this way. The criticism in the *Times* called for instant expostulation, and my answer was consequently sent in to the Editor, who forthwith returned it, regretting 'that its tone prevented its appearance in the paper' . . . I thereupon withdrew to write the following note to the Editor in person:—

Dear Sir, — Permit me to call your courteous attention to the fact that the enclosed letter to the Editor of the *Times*, is in reply to an article that appeared in your paper — and that, as I sign my name in full, I alone am responsible for its tone or form; indeed that such is its tone and form, is because it is my letter.

In common fairness the answer to, or com-

ment upon any statements made in your paper should be published in your paper, as proper etiquette prevents its insertion in any other journal.

Also, you surely would not propose to dictate certain forms or styles in which alone the columns of the *Times* are to be approached —as who would say all other savour of sacrilege! —or aquiescence alone would do—and you would have to write all your letters yourselves.

My letter concerns the effect produced by criticism of a commonplace and inferior kind, wholly unworthy the first paper in England—and I am startled to learn, and still unwilling to believe, that the *Times* would shun all ventilation and refuse to publish any letter as its sole means of screening its staff or protecting its writers.

I submit that the tone of my letter sins against no laws that are accepted in antagonism—that it offends in no way the etiquette of attack known to gentlemen.

I beg, therefore again, that if there be still time for its insertion, you will have it printed in your issue of to-morrow, or will say that it shall appear in the *Times* of Thursday morning.

I am, dear sir,

very faithfully,

J. McNeill Whistler.

I was now told, 'with the Editor's compliments,' 'that my letter should be considered.' Taking this in complete good faith, I left the

office, to discover the next day in print, a remnant of the letter in question, that, by itself, entirely did away with sufficient reason for its being there at all. The two ensuing notes explain themselves:

'The Editor of the *Times* has inserted in to-day's paper the only portion of Mr. Whistler's letter of November 30 which appears to have any claim to publication.

'Printing House Square, Dec. 1, 1886.'

Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the consummate sense of opportunity displayed by the Editor of the *Times*, in his cunning production of a part of my letter.

Amazing! *Mes compliments!*

J. McNeill Whistler.

Without further comment I hand you a copy of the rejected letter.

To the Editor of the *Times*. Sir,—In his article upon the Society of British Artists, your Art gentleman ventures the opinion of the 'plain man.'

That such opinion is out of place and stultifying in a question of Art never occurs to him, and it is therefore frankly cited as, in a way, conclusive.

The *naïf* train of thought that justified the importance attached to this poor 'plain' opinion at all, would seem to be the same that pervades

the writing throughout; until it becomes difficult to discover where the easy effrontery and self-sufficiency of the 'plain one,' nothing doubting, cease, and the wit and wisdom of the experienced expert begin—so that one unconsciously confounds the incautious critic, with the plausible plain person, who finally becomes the same authority.

Blind plainness certainly is the characteristic of the solemn censure upon the fine work of Mr. Stott, of Oldham — plain blindness the omission of all mention of Mr. Ludovici's dainty dancing girl.

Bewilderment among paintings is naturally the fate of the 'plain man,' but, when put forth in the *Times*, his utterances, however empty, acquire a semblance of sense; so that while he gravely descants with bald assurance upon the engineering of the light in the galleries, and the decoration of the walls, the reader stands a chance of being misled, and may not discover, at once, that the 'plain' writer is qualified by ignorance alone to continue.

Permit me, therefore, to rectify inconsequent impressions, and tell your readers that there is nothing 'tentative' in the 'arrangement' of colour, walls, or drapery — that the battens should *not* 'be removed' — that they are meant to remain, not only for their use, but as bringing parallel lines into play that subdivide charmingly the lower portion of the walls and add to their light appearance — that the whole 'combination' is

complete — and that the ' plain man ', is, as usual, ' out of it. ' — I am, sir, etc.,

J. McNeill Whistler.

The question of fair dealing and good manners in this matter I could not leave in better hands than your own, and I will only add that hitherto I have always met with the utmost readiness on the part of the press to receive into their columns any reply, however opposed to assertions of their own.

Surely it is but poor policy, this peremptory attempt to maintain in authority the weak and blundering one, that he may destroy himself and bring sorrow upon his people.

Rather let him be thrust from his post, that he may be ' brayed in a mortar among wheat with a pestle ' — that the Just be assuaged and foolishness depart from among us.

The Pall Mall Gazette, Dec. 9, 1886.

OF ETCHINGS

PROPOSITIONS

I. THAT in Art it is criminal to go beyond the means used in its exercise.

II. That the space to be covered should always be in proper relation to the means used for covering it.

III. That in etching, the means used, or instrument employed, being the finest possible point, the space to be covered should be small in proportion.

IV. That all attempts to overstep the limits insisted upon by such proportion, are inartistic thoroughly, and tend to reveal the paucity of the means used, instead of concealing the same, as required by Art in its refinement.

V. That the huge plate, therefore, is an offence — its undertaking an unbecoming display of determination and ignorance — its accomplishment a triumph of unthinking earnestness and uncontrolled energy — endowments of the 'duffer.'

VI. That the custom of 'Remarque' emanates from the amateur, and reflects his foolish facility beyond the border of his picture, thus testifying to his unscientific sense of its dignity.

VII. That it is odious.

VIII. That, indeed, there should be no margi on the proof to receive such ‘ Remarque.’

IX. That the habit of margin, again, date from the outsider, and continues with th collector in his unreasoning connoisseurship– taking curious pleasure in the quantity paper.

X. That the picture ending where the fram begins, and, in the case of the etching, th white mount, being inevitably, because of it colour, the frame, the picture thus extends itse irrelevantly through the margin to the mount.

XI. That wit of this kind would leave si inches of raw canvas between the painting an its gold frame, to delight the purchaser with th quality of the cloth.

THEODORE CHILD

THE COCKS OF CHELSEA CROW

IN a long and elaborate article in the *Fortnightly Review*, Mr. Theodore Child established a reputation for courage and art wisdom by his bold proclamation of Mr. Whistler as 'master' among the painters of our time.

He dwelt upon the noble simplicity of Mr. Whistler's productions, and pointed out that, while this one serious and scientific worker is esteemed and looked up to in France, we, in England, had permitted ourselves to mistake him for the mere trifler and *mystificateur*.

In an equally long and elaborate article in the New York *Sun*, of Dec. 12, 1886, Mr. Theodore Child decries his hero as a charlatan and *poseur*, with the usual accompaniments we have so long been accustomed to.

The following letter is Mr. Whistler's acknowledgement:—

'Was it dollars, Theodore, that did it? or were they shekels of the '*Haute Juiverie*'? — and was it at the old price?

'In the environs of Paris, on the Buttes Montmartre or at Ramponneau, shall you yet find an unused Potter's field? And will the

thirty pieces of silver now hire it for the night, as they did in simpler times?

'If not, where will you go with your rope, that your bowels may come out within ken of the police? — that while the cocks of Chelsea, whither you made your humble pilgrimage, still crow, something be done quickly — lest, like 'Arry, neglected by the parish, you lie 'stinking many days.'

Mr. Child, whose own language hereupon would seem to have gone from him, delivers himself desperately in another tongue: —

'Entre gens civilisés il est d'usage au moins d'accuser réception des lettres qu'on nous adresse. J'ai donc l'honneur de vous accuser réception de votre épitre; qui m'a profondément attristé. Pourquoi? Parce-que je la trouve indigne d'un homme de votre esprit — grossière et surtout bête. Quelle lourde patte! décidément vous baissez, mon maître, et dans vos métaphores vous devenez, ma foi, 'pompier'. Compliments de condoléance.'

THEODORE CHILD.

To which Mr. Whistler replies :—

'I beg to acknowledge safe arrival of scalp, 'Theodore Child,' in capital condition — *merci tant!*' HENRY LABOUCHERE.

Truth, Jan. 13, 1887.

THEODORE CHILD

A FEW PAGES OF CLEVER PROSE

EXCELLENT and impartial *Truth!* Mr. Whistler has misled you.

My article in the New York *Sun* (Dec. 5, and not Dec. 12, as you state) is entitled 'Mr. Whistler's Ten o'Clock,' and deals exclusively with the paradoxes and theories of Whistler, the preacher, the lecturer, and the wit.

In the introductory lines, I took care to place Whistler, the admirable painter and the marvellous etcher, on a lofty pedestal of respect and admiration, before proceeding to criticise his few pages of clever prose, which will certainly not carry down to posterity the name of the painter of the portraits of Carlyle and of Sarasate.

Mr. Whistler labours under a delusion if he imagines that he is swaggering about London with my 'scalp' on the end of his slender wand.

On the contrary, I have a suspicion that it is only the damaged state of his own 'scalp' which causes him to adjourn so long, if not indefinitely, his promised evangelising trip to America.

I enclose you the text of the incriminated

article so that you may judge for yourself whether my criticism is not worthy of a more witty reply than Mr. Whistler's re-hash and misapplication of a threadbare anecdote borrowed from the Christian épopée.

THEODORE CHILD.

Truth, Jan. 20, 1887

THEODORE CHILD

THE NEVER DOUBTING ONE

I LIFT the scalp—who so deftly! And this is art, Henry, and pretty to see. Daintily is it done withal, that long after the wisp hangs, pinned and catalogued, in my collection, its sometime owner continues not to miss it.

So we have this doomed and never-doubting one of the Boulevards lingering on—smiling daily 'at the hour of the *absinthe*,' a ghastly spectacle with his hat on!—an unconscious tribute to the master's skill.

Truth, Jan. 27, 1887.

BUTTERFLY CALUMNY

DEAR Atlas,—'Your James' has published some calumnious butterfly prose about me in Henry's paper.

Will you give me hospitalty for a reply?

I am accused of being a turncoat, and of having, in an article published in the New York *Sun*, abandoned the opinions concerning Mr. Whistler's work which I had the pleasure of expressing in the *Fortnightly*.

This is an absolute misrepresentation. My article in the *Sun* is entitled 'Mr. Whistler's Ten o'Clock,' and begins thus:

'Here in Paris we only know Whistler the etcher of the Thames and of Venice, and Whistler the painter of 'The White Girl,' exhibited in the Salon of 1863, of the Japanese fantasie 'On The Balcony,' of 'At the Piano,' and of the portraits of Miss Alexander, of Thomas Carlyle, and of the artist's mother—half a dozen works which are as near masterpieces as anything which this century has produced.

'As an etcher, Whistler has done work which bears comparison with the work of Rembrandt;

as a painter, he has signed pictures which suggest the mysterious simplicity of Velasquez.

'Thus his position as an artist is most honorable.'

After having thus placed Mr. Whistler, the painter and etcher, safely away on a pedestal of respect, I proceed in my article to study at some length the paradoxes of the 'Ten o'Clock,' and to criticise 'Jimmy' the wit and 'Jimmy' the preacher, whose ambition it is to become the Sarah Bernhardt of the lecture-room.

The only answer 'Jimmy' can make to my article is to go to America at once.

It is not by continually 'disappointing a continent' t' [illegible] will convince the Trans-atlantic public [illegible]ne excellency of his 'Ten o'Clock' gospel.

THEODORE CHILD.

The World, Jan. 19, 1887.

DID YOU KNOW THIS CHILD, THEODORE ?

ATLAS, my dear !—I greet you because you have spoken. Did you know this Child—Theodore ? Forgive ! It is late, though, now, and what is done, is done—and well done, as well you know. I fear me not all the cold cream of the chemist, nor all the glycerine of your sympathy, can undo it.

Forget ! old friend—and let us be merry !

The World, Jan. 26, 1887.

THEODORE CHILD

THE DISCREET CADI

THE Whistler-Child correspondence calls to mind the story of an eastern Cadi, who had two culprits brought before him for causing a riot in the market-place. When he learned that one was a critic and the other a painter, he ordered them both from his presence.

'Who shall decide,' he said, 'between the Brush and the Quill?'

As they were leaving the two men fell to rating each other roundly, indulging in all manner of gentle expletive.

'Decency, friends, decency,' said the venerable Cadi, 'refinement is not expected.'

SHERIDAN FORD.

From a Paris Letter to the *Bacheller Newspaper 'Syndicate,'* Feb. 18, 1887.

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

THE COMMONPLACE EXCLUDED

MY attention has been directed to a paragraph that has gone the round of the papers, to the effect that Mr. John Burr and Mr. Reid have 'withdrawn from the Society of British Artists.' This tardy statement acquires undue significance at this moment, with a tendency to mislead, implying, as it might, that these resignations were in consequence of, and intended as a marked disapproval of, the determined stand made by the Society in excluding from their coming exhibition the masses of commonplace work hitherto offered to the public in their galleries. No such importance attaches, however, to their resignations, as these two gentlemen left Suffolk-street six months ago.

The Daily News, Nov. 22, 1886.

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

FOR PATRONS TO DECIDE

MR. WHISTLER denies that the recent policy of the Society of British Artists was the cause of the secession of Messrs. Burr and Reid from the ranks of that Society, and mentions in proof of his correction that their resignation took place six months ago. He might have gone further, and added that their secession corresponded in time with his own election as president. It is well known to artists that one, if not both, of these gentlemen left the Society knowing that changes of policy, of which they could not approve, were inevitable under the presidency of Mr. Whistler. It will be for the patrons of the Suffolk-street Gallery to decide whether the more than half-uncovered walls which will be offered to their view next week are more interesting than the work of many artists of more than average merit which will be conspicuous by its absence, owing to the selfish policy inaugurated.

A British Artist.

The Daily News, Nov. 24, 1886.

THE PERIOD OF THE PATRON HAS PASSED AWAY

THE anonymous 'British Artist' says that 'Mr. Whistler denies that the recent policy of the Society of British Artists was the cause of the secession of Messrs. Reid and Burr from the ranks of that Society.'

Far from me to propose to penetrate the motives of such withdrawal, but what I did deny was that it could possibly be caused—as its strangely late announcement seemed sweetly to insinuate—by the strong determination to tolerate no longer the mediocre work that had hitherto habitually swarmed the walls of Suffolk-street.

This is a plain question of date, and I pointed out that these two gentlemen left the Society six months ago—long before the supervising committee were called upon to act at all, or make any demonstration whatever. Your correspondent regrets that I do not 'go further,' and straightway goes further himself, and scarcely fares better, when, with a quaintness of *naïveté* rare at this moment, he proposes that 'it will be for the patrons of the gallery to decide whether the more than half-uncovered

walls are more interesting than the works of many artists of more than the average merit.'

Now it will be for the patrons to decide absolutely nothing. It is, and will always be, for the gentlemen of the hanging commitee alone, duly chosen, to decide whether empty space be preferable to poor pictures—whether, in short, it be their duty to cover walls, merely that walls may be covered—no matter with what quality of work.

Indeed the period of the patron has utterly passed away, and the painter takes his place——to point out what he knows to be consistent with the demands of his art—without deference to patrons or prejudice to party. Beyond this, whether the 'policy of Mr. Whistler and his following,' be 'selfish or no,' matters but little; but if the policy of your correspondent's 'following' find itself among the ruthlessly rejected, his letter is more readily explained.

The Daily News, Nov. 26, 1886.

THE ARTISTS CAME OUT—THE BRITISH REMAIN

THE adverse vote by which the Royal Society of British Artists transferred its oath of allegiance from Mr. Whistler is for the time the chief topic of conversation in artistic circles. . . We instructed our representative to visit Mr. Whistler to obtain his explanation of the affair.

'The state of affairs?' said Mr. Whistler, in his light and airy way, raising his eyebrows and twinkling his eyes, as if it were all the best possible fun in the world; 'why, my dear sir, there's positively *no* state of affairs at all. Contrary to public declaration, there's actually nothing chaotic in the whole business; on the contrary, everything is in order, just as it should be, and as is always the case in the event of a downfall of any kind. The survival of the fittest as regards the presidency, don't you see, and, well—Suffolk-street is itself again! A new government has come in, and, as I told the members the other night, I congratulate the Society on the result of their vote, for no longer can it be said that the right man is in the wrong place. No doubt their

pristine sense of undisturbed somnolence will again settle upon them after the exasperated mental condition arising from the unnatural strain recently put upon the old ship.'

'You do not then consider the Society as out of date? You do not think, as is sometimes said, that the establishment of the Grosvenor took away the *raison d'être* and original intention of the Society — that of being a foil to the Royal Academy?'

'I can hardly say what was originally intended, but I do know that it was originally full of hope and determination, and that is proved, don't you see, by getting a Royal Charter—the only art society in London, I believe, that has one.

'But by degrees it lapsed into a condition of incapacity—a sort of secondary state—till it acknowledged itself a species of *crêche* for the Royal Academy. Certain it is that when I came into it the prevalent feeling among all the men was that their best work should go to 'another place.'

'I felt that this sense of inferiority was fatal to the well-being of the place, don't you see — very well. And for that reason I attempted to bring about a sense of *esprit de corps* and ambition, which culminated in what might be called 'my first offence' — by my proposition that members belonging to other societies should hold no official position in ours. I wanted to make it an art centre, they wanted it to remain a shop, although I said to them, 'Gentlemen, don't you perceive that as shopmen you have already failed, don't you see?'

But they were under the impression that the sales decreased under my methods and my *régime*, and ignored the fact that sales had declined all over the country from all sorts of causes, commercial, and so on. Their only chance lay in the art tone, for the old-fashioned pictures had ceased to become saleable wares—buyers simply wouldn't buy them But members' work I *couldn't*, by the rules, eliminate—only the bad outsiders were choked off.'

'Then how do you explain the bitterness of all the opposition?'

'A question of 'pull devil, pull baker,' and the devil has gone and the bakers remain in Suffolk-street. Here is a list of the fiendish party, who protested against the thrusting forth of their president in such an unceremonious way:—

'Theodore Roussel, Alfred Stevens, Nelson Maclean, Macnab, Waldo Story, A. Ludovici jun., Sidney Starr, Francis James, W. A. Rixon, Aubrey Hunt, Moffatt P. Lindner, E. G. Girardot, Ludby, Arthur Hill, Llewellyn, W. Christian Symons, C. Wyllie, A. F. Grace, J. E. Grace, J. D. Watson, Mortimer Menpes, Jacomb Hood, Thornley, J. J. Shannon, and Charles Keen. Why, the very flower of the Society! and whom have they left—*bon Dieu!* whom have they left?'

'It was a hard fight then?'

'My dear sir, they brought up the maimed, the halt, the lame, and the blind — literally, like

in Hogarth's 'Election;' they brought up everything but corpses. My presidential career had in a manner been a busy one. When I took charge of the ship I found her more or less water-logged. Well, I put the men to the pumps and thoroughly shook up the old vessel; had her re-rigged, re-cleaned, and re-painted — and finally I was graciously permitted to run up the Royal Standard to the masthead, and brought her fully to the fore, ready for action — as became a Royal flagship. And as a natural result mutiny at once set in!

'What might be considered, by the thoughtless, as benefits, were resented, by the older and wiser of the crew, as innovations and intrusions of an impertinent and offensive nature. But the immediate result was that interest in the Society was undeniably developed, not only at home, but certainly abroad. Notably in Paris all the art circle was keenly alive to what was taking place in Suffolk-street; and, although their interest in other institutions in this country had previously flagged, there was the strong willingness to take part in its exhibitions. For example, there was M. Alfred Stevens, who showed his own sympathy with the progressive efforts by becoming a member. And look at the throngs of people that crowded our private views. But what will you! the question is, after all, purely a parochial one — and here I would stop to wonder, if I do not seem pathetic and out of character, why the Artist is naturally an object

of vituperation to the Vestryman? Why am I — who, of course, as you know, am charming — why am I the pariah of my parish?

'Why should these people do other than delight in me? Why should they perish rather than forgive the one who had thrust upon them honour and success?'

'And the moral of it all?'

Mr. Whistler became impressive — almost imposing — as he stroked his moustaches, and tried to hide a smile behind his hand.

'The organization of the 'Royal Society of British Artists,' as shown by its very name, tended perforce to this final convulsion, resulting in the separation of the elements of which it was composed. They could not remain together, and so you see the 'Artists' have come out, and the 'British' remain — and peace and sweet obscurity are restored to Suffolk-street.'

The Pall Mall Gazette, June 11, 1888.

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF WHISTLER

SINCE our interview with Mr. Whistler curious statements have been set afloat concerning the question of finance . . . giving circumstantial evidence of the disaster brought upon the Society by the enforcement of the Whistlerian policy :—

This evidence, which is very interesting, is as follows : The sales of the Society during the year 1881, were under £5,000 ; 1882, under £6,000 ; 1883, under £7,000 ; 1884, under £8,000 ; 1885, (the first year of Mr. Whistler's rule), they fell to under £4,000 ; 1886, under £3,000 ; 1887, under £2,000 ; and the present year, under £1,000.

On the other hand, the fact of the Society having made itself responsible to Mr. Whistler for a loan raised by him to meet a sudden expenditure for repairs, is also true ; but the unwisdom of the president and members of any society having money transactions between them need hardly be commented upon here. . .

Mr. Wyke Bayliss, the new president, strikes one as being ' a strong man '—shrewd, logical, and self-restrained. The author of several books

and pamphlets on the more imaginative realm of art, he is, one would say, as much permeated by religion as he is by art ; to both of these qualities, curiously enough, his canvases, which usually deal with cathedral interiors of cheery hue, bear witness.

The hero of three Bond-street ' one-man exhibitions,' a Board-school chairman, a lecturer, champion chess player of Surrey, a member of the Rochester Diocesan Council, a Shaksperian student, a Fellow of the Society of Cyclists, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquarians, and public orator of Noviomagus . . he is surely one of the most versatile men who ever occupied a presidential chair. . .

The Pall Mall Gazette, July 6. 1888.

SOCIETY OF BRITSH ARTISTS

TAMPERING WITH THE WORK OF AN ARTIST

PRAY accept my compliments, and be good enough to inform me at once by whose authority, and upon what pretence, the painting, designed and executed by myself, upon the panel at the entrance of the galleries of Suffolk-street, has been defaced. Tampering with the work of an artist, however obscure, is held to be, in what might be called the international laws of the whole Art world, so villainous an offense, that I must at present decline to entertain the responsibility of the very distinguished and Royal Society of British Artists for what must be due to the rash and ill- considered zeal of some enthusiastic and untutored underling.

Awaiting your reply, I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient, humble servant,

J. McNeill Whistler.

To the Hon. Secretary of the Royal Society of British Artists.

To this letter Mr. Whistler's messenger received the following verbal reply. ' There is no answer — that is your answer. '

The Morning Post, Apr. 1, 1889.

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

A CRUSHED BUTTERFLY

THE notice board of the Royal Society of British Artists bears on a red ground, in letters of gold, the title of the Society. To this Mr. Whistler, during his presidency, added with his own hand a decorative device of a lion and a butterfly. On the eve of our private view it was found that, while the title of the Society, being in pure gold, remained untarnished, Mr. Whistler's designs, being executed in spurious metals, had nearly disappeared, and what little remained was of a dirty brown. The board could not be put up in that state. The lion, however, was not so badly drawn as to make it necessary to do anything more than restore it in permanent colour, and that has accordingly been done. But as the notice board was no longer the actual work of Mr. Whistler, it would manifestly have been improper to have left the butterfly (his well-known signature) attached to it, even if it had not appeared in so crushed a state. The soiled butterfly was therefore effaced. . . .—Yours, etc.,

WYKE BAYLISS.

The Morning Post, Apr. 2, 1889.

THESE THINGS ARE RIGHT IN CLAPHAM

'Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?'

I HAVE read Mr. Bayliss's letter, and am disarmed. I feel the folly of kicking against the parish pricks. These things are right in Clapham, by the common. 'V'là ce que c'est, c'est bien fait—fallait pas qu'il y aille! fallait pas qu'il y aille!' And when, one of these days, all traces of history shall, by dint of much turpentine, and more Bayliss, have been effaced from the board that 'belongs to us,' I shall be justified, and it will be boldly denied by some dainty student that the delicate butterfly was ever 'soiled' in Suffolk-street. — Yours, etc.,

J. McNeill Whistler.

The Morning Post, Apr. 3, 1889.

THE LION AND THE BUTTERFLY LIE DOWN TOGETHER

'WELL, Mr. Whistler, they say they only painted out vour butterfly from the sign-board, and changed the date. What do you say?'

'What do I say? That they have been guilty of an act of villainous Vandalism.'

'Will you tell me the history of the Board?'

'When I was elected to the presidency of the Society I offered to paint a signboard which should proclaim to the passer-by the name and nature of the Society. My offer was accepted, and the Board was sent down to my studio, where I treated is as I should a most distinguished sitter—as a picture or an etching—throwing my artistic soul into the Board, which gradually became a Board no longer, as it grew into a picture. You say they say it was only a butterfly. Mendacity could go no further. I painted a *lion* and a butterfly. The lion lay with the butterfly—a harmony in gold and red, with which I had taken as much trouble as I did with the best picture I ever painted. And now they have clothed my golden lion clumsily, awkwardly, and timorously

with a dirty coat of black. My butterfly has gone, the checks and lines, which I had treated decoratively, have disappeared. Am I not justified in calling it a piece of gross Vandalism?'

'What course would you have recommended? You had gone; the Board remained: perhaps it was weather-beaten—what could they do?'

'They should have taken the Board down, sir, taken the Board down, not dared to destroy my work—taken the Board down, returned it to me, and got another Board of their own to practise on. Good heavens! You say to my face it was only a Board. You say they *only* painted out my butterfly. It is as if you were condoling with a man who had been robbed and stripped, and said to him, Never mind. It is well it is no worse. You have escaped easily. Why, you might have had your throat cut.'

The Pall Mall Gazette, Apr. 3, 1889.

A TIMID SENSE OF DANGER CALLED JUSTICE

IT would seem proper that there should be recorded the details of an incident in which the element of grave offence is, not unnaturally, quite missed by the people in their indignation at the insignificance of the object to which public attention has so unwarrantably been drawn — a 'notice board'! — the common sign of commerce!

Now, however slight might be the value of the work in question destroyed, it is surely of startling interest to know that *work may be destroyed*, or worse still, defaced and tampered with, at the present moment in full London, with the joyous approval of the major part of the popular press.

I leave to your comment the fact that in this instance the act is committed with the tacit consent of a body of gentlemen officially styled 'artists,' at the instigation of their president, as he unblushingly acknowledges, and will here distinctly state that the 'notice board of the Royal Society of British Artists' *did not* 'bear on a red ground, in letters of gold, the title of the Society,' and that 'to this Mr. Whistler

during his presidency' *did not* 'add with his own hand a decorative device of a lion and a butterfly.' This damning evidence, though in principle irrelevant — for what becomes of the soul of a 'Diocesan member of the Council of Clapham' is, artistically, a matter of small moment — I nevertheless bring forward as the only one that will at present be at all considered or even understood.

The 'notice board' was of the familiar blue enamel, well known in metropolitan use, with white lettering, announcing that the exhibition of the Incorporated Society of British Artists was held above, and that for the sum of one shilling the public might enter.

I myself mixed the 'red ground,' and myself placed, 'in letters of gold, the' *new* 'title' upon it — in proper relation to the decorative scheme of the whole design, of which it formed naturally an all-important feature. The date was that of the Society's Royal grant, and in commemoration of its new birth. With the offending Butterfly it has now been effaced in one clean sweep of independence, while the lion, 'not so badly drawn,' was differently dealt with — it was found not 'necessary to do anything more than restore it in permanent colour, and that,' with a bottle of Brunswick black, 'has accordingly been done'; and, as Mr. Bayliss adds, with unpremeditated truth, in the thoughtless pride of achievement,' the notice board was no longer the actual work of Mr. Whistler!'

This exposure of Mr. Bayliss's direct method I have wickedly withheld, in order that the Philistine impulse of the country should declare itself in all its freshness of execration, before it could be checked by awkward discovery of mere mendacity, and a timid sense of danger called justice.

Everything has taken place as I pleasantly foresaw, and there is by this time, with the silent exception of one or two cautious dailies, scarcely a lay paper in the land that has been able to refrain from joining in the hearty yell of delight at the rare chance of coarseley, publicly, and safely insulting an artist! In this eagerness to affront the man they have irretrievably and ridiculously committed themselves to open sympathy with the destruction of his work.

I wish coldly to chronicle this fact in the archives of the *Athenæum* for the future consideration of the cultured New Zealander.

J. McNeill Whistler.

The Athenæum, Apr. 27, 1889.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

A MIND NOT NARROWED BY KNOWLEDGE *

BRAVO! Bard! and exquisitely written, I suppose, as becomes your state. The scientific irrelevancies and solemn popularities, less elaborately embodied, I seem to have met with before — in papers signed by more than one serious and unqualified sage, whose mind, also, was not narrowed by knowledge. 'I have been personal,' you say; and, faith! you prove it! Thank you, my dear! I have lost a *confrère;* but, then, I have gained an acquaintance — one Algernon Swinburne — 'outsider' — Putney.

The World. June 3, 1888.

* Called out by Mr. Swinburne's criticism of the *Ten o'Clock* in the *Fortnightly Review* of June, 1888, deriding Mr. Whistler as 'a jester.'

THE MUNICH EXHIBITION

A SECOND-HAND COMPLIMENT

SIR, — I beg to acknowledge the receipt of yo letter, officially informing me that the Commi tee award me a second-class gold medal. Pray conv my sentiments of tempered and respectable joy the gentlemen of the Committee, and my comple appreciation of the second-hand compliment paid m

And I have, Sir,
The honour to be
Your most humble, obedient servant,

J. McNeill Whistler.

To the 1st Secretary
Central Committee,
International Art Exhibition, Munich.

The World, Sept. 5, 1883.

WILLIAM STOTT OF OLDHAM

A SPONTANEOUS MOVEMENT

GENTLEMEN, — I beg to express my deep sense of regret at the episode of last night in the drawing-room of the Hogarth Club, when one of the newly-elected members—Mr Stott of Oldham—entering the room at about midnight, came up to me and, without preface of any kind, addressed me in the following terms :— ' You are a liar and a coward.'

We were alone in the room with Mr. John Reid, who witnessed fully what took place.

I immediately rose up and slapped Mr. Stott's face—a spontaneous movement ; and, gentlemen, you must admit, most inevitable consequence of such gross insult.

I am also grieved to add that the first slap was followed by a second one, and the incident closed by a kick administered upon a part of Mr. Stott of Oldham's body that finally turned towards me, and that I leave to him to specify.

I thereupon resumed my interrupted conversation with Mr. Reid, and was no further disturbed by Mr. Stott of Oldham.

I think it is my duty to inform you, gentlemen, of these facts, and, feeling sure of your sympathy

in the unpremeditated course of action forced upon me, I earnestly beg that some measures be taken to prevent the recurrence of such intolerable provocation and monstrous insult.—And I have, gentlemen, the honour to be your obedient servant,

J. McNeill Whistler.

Jan. 4, 1889.

To the Committee of the Hogarth Club.

Paris Edition *N. Y. Herald,* Jan. 1889.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MR. WHISTLER'S STRONG ARM

AN account of the fracas at the Hogarth Club between myself and Mr. Whistler has appeared in your paper. No one will be surprised to see that Mr. Whistler has once more slain a man.

The autobiography of Mr. Whistler's strong arm is always diverting.

Lest, however, it should, in this instance, be convincing as well, I request your permission to state the plain truth.

I did address to Mr. Whistler the expressions cited in his letter, and, for the sake of the Hogarth Club, I deeply regret it.

The feelings with which I hope the very sight of Mr. Whistler will always inspire me, for the moment overpowered my self-control. I have no other excuse to make.

I am not concerned to defend these expressions here, for they refer to a private matter. If I were, I could point in justification of one of them to the account of the occurrence in Mr. Whistler's letter.

All who happen to be acquainted with the difference in physique between Mr. Whistler

and myself will judge for themselves of the probability of his ridiculous version of what followed.

To those who are, at the same time, acquainted with the difference between us in other respects, it must be quite unnecessary to say one word.

In truth, Mr. Whistler took his lesson more gently than I could have expected, and, if he can find any satisfaction to his wounded honour in the method of his protest against it—such as it really was—he is not difficult to please. I, for my part, am heartily content.

William Stott,

of Oldham.

Paris Edition *N. Y. Herald*, Jan. 29, 1889.

WILLIAM STOTT OF OLDHAM

CONSTRUCTING A POSITION IN PRINT

I HAVE just read Mr. Stott of Oldham's 'version' of what he recognises to have been an 'unpleasantness' in the Hogarth Club.

Mr. Stott of Oldham makes much of his superior size, and points out that if it could have been true that I had slapped him and kicked him, I should really have slapped and kicked a much larger man than myself.

Permit me, here, to refer you to my letter to the committee of the club, which is unrelenting upon this point, and to hand to you, herewith, a copy of the letter that Mr. John Reid, the only witness of the facts, also wrote immediately to the committee of the club.

'To the Committee of the Hogarth Club. Gentlemen,— I have seen the letter written by Mr. Whistler to you. Its contents are quite true, and I think that Mr. Stott of Oldham must either apologise to Mr. Whistler (he has done so to me) or he must retire from the club. I may mention that I advised him to do so at the time—make an apology.—Gentlemen, I remain, yours truly,

'John R. Reid.'

WILLIAM STOTT OF OLDHAM

Mr. Stott of Oldham was surely unaware of the existence of this letter when he ventured to construct for himself a position in print, and, of all papers, fatally selected your widely-circulated journal.

'I, for my part,' says Mr. Stott of Oldham, in peaceful conclusion, 'am heartily content;' and I have, so far, had every reason to believe him.

J. McNeill Whistler.

Paris Edition *N. Y. Herald*, Jan. 24, 1889.

REWARDS THAT BRING THEIR OWN VIRTUE*

MR. CHAIRMAN and Gentlemen,—You must feel that for me it is no easy task to reply under conditions of which I have so little habit.

We are all even too conscious that mine has, hitherto, I fear, been the gentle answer that sometimes turneth not away wrath.

This is an age of rapid results, when remedies insist upon their diseases, that science shall triumph and no time be lost; and so have we also rewards that bring with them their own virtue.

It would ill become me to question my fitness for the position which it has pleased this distinguished company to thrust upon me.

It has before now been borne in upon me that in surroundings of antagonism I may have

*Mr. Whistler's reply to the toast of the evening at the complimentary dinner given him in the Criterion in London, April 1, 1889, in recognition of his influence upon art at h me and abroad, and to congratulate him upon his election to the Royal Academ of Munich.

wrapped myself for protection in a species of misunderstanding—as that other traveller drew closer about him the folds of his cloak the more bitterly the winds and the storm assailed him on his way.

The Sunday Times, May 5, 1889.

M. H. SPIELMANN

THE HONOURS BELONG TO THE PUBLISHER

MR. WHISTLER has issued a brown-paper portfolio of half a dozen 'Notes,' reproduced in marvellous facsimile. These 'Notes' are delightful sketches in Indian ink and crayon, masterly so far as they go—but, then, they go such a little way . . . the 'Notes' can only be regarded as painter's raw material, interesting as correct sketches, but unworthy the glories of facsimile reproduction, and imposing margin. . . . The chief honours of the portfolio belong to the publishers . . .

M. H. SPIELMANN.

The Magazine of Art, December, 1887.

M. H. SPIELMANN

THE ALTERNATIVE OF THE BEWILDERED ONE

YOU, who are, I perceive, in your present brilliant incarnation, an undaunted and undulled pursuer of pleasing truths, listen, I pray you, while again I indicate, with sweet argument, the alternative of the bewildered one.

Notably, it is not necessary that the ' Art Critic ' should distinguish between the real and the ' reproduction, ' or otherwise understand anything of the matter of which he writes, in that state of life in which it has pleased God to call him, yet surely, as I have before now pointed out, he might inquire.

Had the expounder of exhibitions, travelling for the *Magazine of Art*, asked the Secretary in the galleries of the Royal Society of British Artists, he would have been told that the ' Notes ' on the staircase, and in the vestibule, are not ' delightful sketches in Indian ink and crayon ... reproduced in marvellous facsimile ... unworthy the glories of facsimile reproduction, and imposing margin ' ... while ' the chief honours of the portfolio, however, belong to the publishers ' —but are, disconcerting as I acknowledge it to

be, themselves the lithographs from nature, drawn on stone upon the spot.

Thus easily provided with paragraph, he would also have been spared the mortification of rebuke from his well-meaning and embarassed employers.

Let the gentleman be warned—let him learn that the foolish critic only, looks, and brings disaster upon his paper—the safe and well-conducted one, 'informs himself.'

Yours, sir, gently,

The Sunday Times, Jan. 15, 1888.

M. H. SPIELMANN

UNHAPPY HASTE

I FIND myself obliged to notice the critical review of the 'Ten o'Clock,' that appeared in your paper (March 6).

In the interest of my publishers, I beg to state formally that the work has not as yet been issued at all—and I would point out that what is still in the hands of the printer, cannot possibly have fallen into the fingers of your incautious contributor! The early telegram is doubtless the ambition of this smart, though premature and restless one—but he is wanting in habit, and unhappy in his haste! — What will you? The *Pall Mall* and the people have been imposed upon. Be good enough, Sir, to insert this note, lest the public suppose, upon your authority, that the 'Ten o'Clock,' as yet unseen in the window of Piccadilly, has, in consequence of this sudden summing up, been hurriedly withdrawn from circulation.—I am, Sir,

The Pall Mall Gazette, Mar, 28, 1888.

M. A. SPIELMANN

WRITHING UNDER ADVERSE CRITICISM

JUST three weeks after publication Mr. Whistler ' finds himself obliged to notice the critical review of the ' Ten O'Clock' that appeared in your paper.'. . . I can declare—and you, Sir, will corroborate me—that a printed copy of Mr. Whistlers's smart but misleading lecture was placed in my hands for review, and, moreover, that the notice did not appear until the pamphlet was duly advertised by Messrs. Chatto and Windus as ready. It is, of course, a matter of regret to me if, as Mr Whistler suggests, his publishers' interests are likely to suffer from the review ; but if an author's work, in the reviewer's opinion, be full of rash statement and mischievous doctrine, the publishers must submit to the risk of frank criticism. But it will be observed that Mr. Whistler is merely seeking to create an impression that your reviewer never saw the work he criticized, which is surely not a creditable position to take up, even by a sensitive man writhing under adverse criticism.—I am, Sir, most obediently,

YOUR REVIEWER.

The Pall Mall Gazette, Mar. 31, 1888.

A PRINTED PROOF QUAINTLY ACQUIRED

MY apologies, I pray you, to the much disturbed gentlemen, 'Your Reviewer,' who complains that I have allowed 'just three weeks' to go by without noticing his writing.

Let me hasten, lest he be further offended, to acknowledge his answer, in Saturday's paper.

After much matter, he comes unexpectedly upon a clear understanding of my letter—'It will be observed,' he says naïvely, 'that Mr. Whistler is merely seeking to create an impression that your Reviewer never saw the work he criticized,'—herein he is completely right, this is absolutely the impression I did seek to create—'which,' he continues, 'is surely not a creditable position to take up'—again I agree with him, and admit the sad spectacle a 'Reviewer' presents in such a position.

He further 'declares,' and calls upon you, Sir, to 'corroborate' him 'that a printed copy of Mr. Whistler's misleading lecture was placed in my hands for review'—and moreover, that 'the notice did not appear until the pamphlet was duly advertised by Messrs. Chatto and Windus as ready.'

Pausing to note that if the lecture had not seemed

misleading to him, it would surely not have been worth uttering at all, I come to the copy in question—this could only have been a printed proof, quaintly acquired—as will be seen by the following letter from Messrs. Chatto and Windus, which I must beg you, Sir, to publish, with this note—as it deals also with the remaining point, the advertisement of the pamphlet,

And, I am, Sir,

The following is the letter from Mr. Whistler's publishers:—

In reply to your question we have to say that we certainly have not sent out any copy of the 'Ten O'clock' to the press, or to anybody else excepting yourself. The work is still in the printers' hands, and we have for a long time past been advertising it only as 'shortly' to be published; indeed, only a few proofs have so far been taken from the type.

Yours faithfully,

Chatto and Windus.

The Pall Mall Gazette, Apr. 7, 1888.

M. H. SPIELMANN

MR. WHISTLER VISITS PARIS

IT is reported that Mr. Whistler, having received word that a drawing of his had been rejected by the Committee of the Universal Exhibition, arrived yesterday in Paris and withdrew all his remaining works, including an oil painting and six drawings. The French consider that he has been guilty of a breach of good manners. The *Paris*, for instance, points out that, after sending his works to the jury, he should have accepted their judgment, and appealed to the public by other methods.

The Pall Mall Gazette, Apr. 26, 1889.

M. H. SPIELMANN

A LITTLE PARAGRAPH IS A DANGEROUS THING

YOU are badly informed—a risk you constantly run in your haste for pleasing news. I have not 'withdrawn' my works from the forthcoming Paris Exhibition. I transported my pictures from the American Department to the British Section of the Exposition Internationale, where I prefer to be represented. 'The French' have nothing, so far, to do with English or American exhibits.

A little paragraph is a dangerous thing.

And I am, sir,

The Pall Mall Gazette, Apr. 27, 1889.

MR. WHISTLER AGGRIEVED

THE HERALD correspondent saw Mr. Whistler at the Hotel Suisse, and asked the artist about his affairs with the American Art Jury of the Exhibition.

'I believe the HERALD made the statement,' said Mr. Whistler, 'that I had withdrawn all my etchings and a portrait of Lady Archibald Campbell from the American section. It all came about in this way: In the first place, before the pictures were sent in I received a note from the American Art Department asking me to contribute some of my work. It was at that time difficult for me to collect my best work; so I borrowed what I could from different people and sent in twenty-seven etchings and an oil portrait of Lady Archibald Campbell.

'You can imagine that a few etchings do not have any effect at all; so I sent the best of what I could get together. Shortly afterwards I received a note saying: 'Sir—Ten of your etchings have not received the approval of the jury. Will you kindly remove them?'

'At the bottom of this note was the name 'Hawkins'— General Hawkins, I believe — a

cavalry officer, who had charge of the American *Art* Department of the Exhibition.

'Well! the next day I went to Paris and called at the American headquarters of the Exhibition. I was ushered into the presence of this gentleman, Hawkins, to whom I said: — 'I am Mr. Whistler, and I believe this note is from you. I have come to remove my etchings'; but I did not mention that my work was to be transferred to the English Art Section.

'Ah,' said the gentleman — the officer — 'we were very sorry not to have had space enough for all your etchings, but we are glad to have seventeen and the portrait.'

'You are too kind,' I said, 'but really I will not trouble you.'

'Mr. Hawkins was quite embarassed, and urged me to reconsider my determination, but I withdrew every one of the etchings, and they are now well hung in the English department.

'I did not mind the fact that my sketches were criticized, but it was the discourteous manner in which it was done. If the request to me had been made in proper language, and they had simply said: —'Mr. Whistler, we have not space enough for twenty-seven etchings. Will you kindly select those which you prefer, and we shall be glad to have them,' I would have given them the privilege of placing them in the American exhibits.'

N. Y. Herald, Paris Edition, Oct. 3, 1889.

R. C. HAWKINS

THE ENGLISH REJECTED EIGHTEEN!

MR. WHISTLER 'jumped' in a most emphatic manner upon General Hawkins, Commissioner of the American Art Department at the Exhibition. He objects to the General for being a cavalry officer; refers to him sarcastically as 'Hawkins,' and declares him ignorant of the most elementary principles alike of art and politeness — all this because he, Whistler, was requested by the Commissioner to remove from the Exhibition premises some ten of his rejected etchings.

In a spirit of fair play a correspondent called upon General Hawkins, who began by gently remarking that Mr. Whistler, in his published remarks, had soared far out of the domain of strict veracity. This was not bad for a beginning, and was ably supported by the following detailed statement:—

'Mr. Whistler says he received a note from me. That is a mistake. I have never in my life

written a line to Mr. Whistler. What he did receive was a circular with my name printed at the bottom. These circulars were sent to all the artists who had pictures refused by the jury, and contained a simple request that such pictures be removed.

'Our way of doing business was not, it seems, up to Mr. Whistler's standard of politeness, so he got angry and took away, not only the ten rejected etchings, but seventeen others which had been accepted. It is a little singular that among about one hundred and fifty artists who received this circular, Mr. Whistler should have been the only one to discover its latent discourtesy. How great must be Mr. Whistler's capacity for detecting a snub where none exists!

'In any case, there is not the slightest reason for Mr. Whistler's venting his ire upon me. I had no more to do with either accepting or rejecting his pictures than I had with painting them. What he sent us was judged on its merits by a competent and impartial jury of his peers. If there were ten etchings rejected it only shows that there were ten etchings not worthy of acceptance. A few days after the affair a trio of journalists—not all men either— came to me, demanding that I reverse this 'iniquitous decision,' as they styled it. I told these three prying scribblers in a polite way that if they would kindly attend to their own affairs I would try to attend to mine. In this connection, I may remark that there are in Paris a number of correspondents who ought not to be allowed within gun-shot of a newspaper office.

'The next mis-statement in Mr. Whistler's interview is in regard to the ultimate disposal of his important etchings. His words are:—'Mr. Hawkins was quite embarrassed, and urged me to reconsider my determination, but I withdrew every one of the etchings, and they are now well hung in the English department.'

'Now, I leave it to any fair minded person if the plain inference from this statement is not that the whole twenty-seven etchings were accepted by the English department. If not, what in heaven's name is he 'crowing' about? But the truth is that while we rejected only *ten* of his etchings, the English department rejected *eighteen* of them, and of the nine accepted only hung two on the line. Had Mr. Whistler been the possessor of a more even temper and a little more common sense, he would have had five or six of his works on the line in the American department, and nearly twice as many on exhibition than is actually the case. Really, I fail to see what he gained by the exchange, unless it was a valuable experience. He says I was embarrassed when I saw him; I fancy he will be embarrassed when he sees these facts in 'cold type'.

N. Y. Herald, Paris Edition, Oct. 4, 1889.

R. C. HAWKINS

WRONGS THAT ARE RIGHTS IN THE ARMY

I BEG that you will kindly print immediately these, my regrets, that General Rush Hawkins should have been spurred into unwonted and unbecoming expression by what I myself read with considerable bewilderment in the NEW YORK HERALD, October 3, under the head of 'Whistler's Grievance.'

I can assure the gallant soldier that I have no grievance.

Had I known that, when — over what takes the place of wine and walnuts in Holland — I remembered lightly the military methods of the jury, I was being 'interviewed', I should have adopted as serious a tone as the original farce would admit of; or I might have even refused to be a party at all to the infliction upon your readers of so old and threadbare a story as that of the raid upon the works of art in the American section of the Universal Exhibition.

Your correspondent, I fancy, felt much more warmly, than did I, wrongs that — who knows? — are doubtless rights in the army: and my sympathies, I confess, are completely

with the General, who did only, as he complains, his duty in that state of life in which it had pleased God, and the War Department, to call him, when, according to order, he signed that naïvely authoritative note, circular, warrant, or what not—for he did irretrievably fasten his name to it, whether with pen or print, thereby hopelessly making the letter his own. Thus have we responsibility, like greatness, sometimes thrust upon us.

On receipt of the document I came, I saw the commanding officer, who, until now, I fondly trusted, would ever remember me as pleasantly as I do himself, and, knowing despatch in all military matters to be of great importance, I then and there relieved him of the troublesome etchings, and carried off the painting.

It is a sad shock to me to find that the good General speaks of me without affection, and that he evinces even joy when he says with a view to my entire discomfiture:— ' While we rejected only ten of his etchings, the English department rejected eighteen of them, and of the nine accepted, only hung two on the line. '

Now, he is wrong — the General is wrong. The etchings now hanging in the English section— and perfect in their hanging, notwithstanding General Hawkins's flattering anxiety—are the only ones I sent there. . . .

There was moreover here no question of submitting them to a ' competent and impartial jury of his peers '—one of whom, by the way, I am informed upon undoubted authority, had never

before come upon an ' etching ' in his hitherto happy and unchequered Western career.

We all know that the space allotted to the English Department was exceedingly limited, and each one refrained from abusing it. Here I would point out again, hoping this time to be clearly understood, that had the methods employed in the American camp, been more civil, if less military, all further difficulties might have been avoided. Had I been properly advised that the room was less than the demand for place, I would, of course, have instantly begged the gentlemen of the jury to choose from among the number what etchings they pleased. So the matter would have ended, and you, Sir, would have been without this charming communication !

The pretty embarrassment of General Hawkins on the occasion of my visit, I myself liked, thinking it seemly and part of the good form of a West Point man, who is taught that a drum-head court martial—and what else in the experience of this finished officer should so fit him for sitting in judgment upon pictures ? — should be presided at with grave and softened demeanor.

If I mistook the General's manner, it is another illusion the less.

N. Y. Herald, Paris Edition, Oct. 9, 1889.

A *PALL MALL GAZETTE* 'HOME OF TASTE'

A DELIGHTFUL comedy is taking place in the London art world. The position of the parties concerned, and the again proven credulity of the public, — combine to shed a glow of humour on a scene that needs only publicity to cover the actors with confusion.

Imagine an artist posing as the creator of a scheme of decoration perfected nearly twenty years ago by his master — a scheme of decoration in use not only in England, but also in other countries. Imagine a London journal promoting the plot, and the press generally falling an easy prey. This is what is passing here at the moment, without a word of protest.

I.

Mr. Mortimer Menpes sustains the leading *rôle*. Originally from Australia, he came into

notice a few years since as a disciple of Mr. Whistler. Some time ago he made a sketching tour in Japan and, upon his return, held an exhibition in New Bond-street which won for him deserved distinction; later, he decorated his house in Fulham, in accordance with Mr. Whistler's well-known ideas of colour and distemper.

Then the *Pall Mall Gazette* rang up the curtain, and the comedy began.

One day as I opened that journal an illustrated interview with Mr. Menpes — headed *The Home of Taste* — caught my eye. The subject attracted me, and I read the article with some interest.

Briefly, I gleaned that — 'Menpes — Japanese Menpes, you know — whose house is in far Fulham . . . a man of an original turn of mind . . . and of peculiar views on wall papers, room tones and so on' — had decorated a house in a manner hitherto unheard of, and on a system which he called his own.

I learned that — 'once within the halls of Menpes all was sweetness and light,' — and that the chambers in the home his genius had made classic were covered with 'a soft wash of lemon-yellow.'

'Here the walls used to be covered' — said Mr. Menpes — 'with a paper of a somber green which oppressed me and made me sad.

'Why cannot I bring the sun into the

house, I said to myself, even in this land of fog and cloud? Then I thought of my experiment. . . . I am glad to be able to introduce my ideas of house furnishing and house decoration to the public, and I may tell you that when I go to America . . . I shall try and decorate a house according to my own ideas, and ask the Americans to think about the matter.'

It is thirty days since this interview appeared and meantime other journals taking their cue from the *Pall Mall*, have paragraphed Mr. Menpes with unthinking praise.

I have waited to see if any critics would rise to a point of order, and lay bare one of the most amusing examples of effrontery the art world has seen for many a day.

A simple statement of the facts—facts that their position did not permit them to ignore—would have sufficed—but it has not been made.

On the contrary, we are told on all sides in recurring paragraphs of misstatement and adulation that Mr. Menpes is the father of a decorative revolution—that was effected about the time he was learning to read—and that for years has been permeating the art soil in every direction.

In a typical article in an afternoon paper—not the *Pall Mall* this time—one writer speaks of his gaining inspiration from leaf and flower for his happiest decorative effects, and especially that of the lemon-yellow.

Has this critic ever heard of the *Ten o'Clock?*

Let me commend these words to his attention: 'When the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry' as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanile, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairy-land is before us—then the wayfarer hastens home; the working man and the cultured one, the wise man and the one of pleasure, cease to understand, as they have ceased to see, and Nature, who, for once, has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone, her son and her master—her son in that he loves her, her master in that he knows her.

'To him her secrets are unfolded, to him her lessons have become gradually clear.

'He looks at her flower, not with the enlarging lens, that he may gather facts for the botanist, but with the light of the one who sees in her choice selection of brilliant tones and delicate tints, suggestions of future harmonies.

'He does not confine himself to purposeless copying, without thought, each blade of grass, as commended by the inconsequent, but, in the long curve of the narrow leaf, corrected by the straight tall stem, he learns how grace is wedded to dignity, how strength enhances sweetness, that elegance shall be the result.

'In the citron wing of the pale butterfly, with its dainty spots of orange, he sees before him the stately halls of fair gold, with their slender

saffron pillars, and is taught how the delicat
drawing high upon the walls shall be traced i
tender tones of orpiment, and repeated by th
base in notes of graver hue.'

II.

'Being an expert at cross-examination and, say it with a blush, a journalistic mendicant o the first order, I not only drew the unconscio Menpes to expatiate on house decoration, but als persuaded him to make me some drawings which I put carefully into my scrip, and no try to present them to the British Philistine —From 'The Home of Taste,' Pall Mall Gazett December 13, 1888.

I took advantage of an idle morning to vis Fulham.

I wanted to see what changes time ha wrought in one who—not long ago—was know as a disciple of Mr. Whistler; and to deter mine, if possible—for journalistic mendicants ar not infallible—whether the *Pall Mall* or Mr Menpes, was responsible for the latter's peculia position.

Mr. Menpes received me in a lemon-yellow room the colour-scheme of which was Whistlerian pur and simple.

I said that I was a writer, who had heard of hir and his house, and asked that I might be pardone

the liberty that I had taken in obtruding upon his privacy.

He seemed in a chatty mood, and at once confided to me that the newspapers were all talking about him. Were there any agencies in the States for supplying press clippings? I was obliged to admit that such vanities were not unknown there. Did they supply them to points as far away as London?

Had I seen his exhibition of Japanese pictures?

I confessed that I had not.

'You should have seen what the papers said at that time,' remarked Mr. Menpes. 'They even had more about me then than at present.'

Thus far, he had been interviewing me.

I now reversed the *rôles* by saying, 'Tell me, pray, how you came to conceive this scheme of decoration?' Here is his answer:

'Do you know Justin McCarthy or Mrs. Campbell Praed? You do not know them personally? Well, I was over in Paris with my friends — the McCarthys — a short time ago, and it was suggested that Mrs. Praed, who was about to furnish a house, should let me aid her with ideas in decoration. Upon our return to London I prepared some panels, illustrating what my plans would be, and submitted them for approval to Mrs. Praed and her husband. The former was satisfied, but the latter was not, and they finally concluded not to adopt

the suggestions. I then determined to put my ideas into execution in my own house, and what you see is the result.

'Is this massing of some simple colour, and the ordered harmony of the whole, entirely original with you?' I asked.

'It is,' said Mr. Menpes.

'Is it the dream of a night?' I asked, 'or have you devoted some time to a study of the subject?'

'I have been thinking it over for five years.'

'When you came to translate your thought into actuality, did it map out measurably as you had conceived it?'

'Absolutely; everything turned out precisely as I had planned.'

There was a Whistler etching on the wall facing us, and I crossed the room to look at it.

'That's a Whistler etching,' remarked Mr. Menpes.

'Have you ever heard of Whistler?

'Whistler?' I said, 'yes, I have heard of him.'

It was his sole allusion to his master.

After some talk touching the price of a picture he was engaged upon, I brought the conversation back to the walls about us by saying:

'In writing of you in the press, you authorise me then, do you, to state that the basic idea of this scheme of yellow distemper originated with yourself, and was neither suggested in part

nor in whole by anything that has been done before?'

'I do,' he answered. 'I am the sole originator of it, and this is the only house in London decorated in this manner. The finishing touches were given less than two months ago. Mr. Lawson, of the *Daily Telegraph,* was here the other day to see the place, and it is probable that he will adopt my ideas for his house. I suppose that in a year or two there will be one thousand London houses decorated as this is now.'

'Who wrote the interview with you that appeared in the *Pall Mall?*'

'Oh, Mr. Morley came down here, but of course I helped him. I made the illustrations, you know, and suggested the title. The *Pall Mall* is to have another article about me in a few days, when my children's fancy dress party takes place'—and it took place, and the article appeared.

Before we separated Mr. Menpes inquired if I would be able to utilise for the newspapers an account of the party.

I said that I might. *Then* he informed me that he would be glad to have me look in—as a guest.

III.

There are in England two new, and in their origin, distinct methods of interior decoration.

Gradually they have coalesced to a degree, though they will always retain their individual traits and differences. These two methods may be termed the Whistlerian, and the English or pre-Raphaelite; the one, spontaneous—fresh—simple, the other, a revival—complex—reformatory.

Through many years, from the early days of the pre-Raphaelites down to the last meeting of the Painter-socialists, an outside influence—a personality—has been making itself felt in London in strange and subtle ways.

In 1873 Mr. Whistler came to live in Lindsey Row, Old Chelsea, with the mother whose venerable face his brush has made familiar.

The skies were dull—the house quaint and spacious—and the artist-occupant in the full tide of his creative power.

Filled with the sentiment of the ages, he conceived—among other conceptions—three simple rules for decoration, which, interpreted in words, might read in this wise: —

First,—That a house should be a complete and dainty thing—from door-knocker to ridge tile.

Second,—That each room should be restful, with ceiling, walls and floor so treated as to give a sense of shelter—freedom—and completeness, terminating in the floor as the base.

Third,—That pure tender colours scientifically used give ease and infinite suggestion, and that a colour should be allowed to play about a room without coming in boisterous contact with another.

While these matters were in his mind, a friend, Mr. Sutherland—director of the P. & O. Company—called at Lindsey Row one evening in the spring of 1873 to see if Mr. Whistler would help him in the decoration of his house.

The latter assented and prepared the plans, but their startling novelty, when developed, caused such evident anxiety—not to say terror—in the director's mind, that Mr. Whistler at once laughingly relieved him from embarrassment by withdrawing from the undertaking, and—in feeble imitation of Mr. Menpes—years after—he also 'determined to put his ideas into execution in his own house.'

And the memorable dinner given a few weeks later marked the date when was revealed the House Beautiful in its completeness—from the delicate turquoise blue door to the slender flower in the vase of Japan.

From that day Mr. Whistler has been the acknowledged leader of decoration, and the refinement of his influence can be traced in the details of daily life.

The beauty of one colour only in the arrangement of flowers instead of the conglomeration of many gaudy ones—harmony of colour in ladies' dress instead of contrast—this loveliness of simple line and mass proceeds from him, and is visible in other things.

Every year saw some fresh assertion of his leadership. His initial exhibition in Pall Mall, in 1874, where — for the first time — walls were

brought into harmony with the pictures upon them, and his successes in Bond Street — at the Fine Art Society and at Dowdeswell's — are accepted facts in the art history of London. Each one of these especially embodied the demonstration of a problem of a colour scheme in decoration, and was heralded by the title of the rooms, 'Arrangement'. So we have seen, in their turn, the 'Arrangement in flesh-colour and grey' — the 'Harmony in gold and brown' — the 'Arrangement in yellow and white' — and others, characteristic — and equally original.

The 'Peacock room' in Prince's Gate is one of the temples of art decoration.

Among other houses that Mr. Whistler has made beautiful are Aubrey house, Kensington, Carlyle Cottage, Chelsea, and the home of Mr. D'Oyley Carte on the banks of the Thames.

His transformation of the Suffolk-street Gallery is not likely to be forgotten.

Oblivious to the interests of the working-man, whom he neither asks to make wall papers, cretonnes nor carpets, he is — notwithstanding — perhaps the greatest socialist of them all, through having inaugurated in his exquisite sense of colour and of ordered harmony, a simplicity — — with the use of distemper, matting and muslin — that suggests an art democracy in which he himself professes no belief.

During these years that he has poured his soft tones over everything, has framed his paintings and etchings in the well-known frames that by

right should — and do — bear his name, and has hung them in the restful, broken lines, so grateful to the eye, with no colour, perhaps, has his name been more closely linked than with that of the lemon-yellow.

Its use originated in the feeling that London houses should gain all possible effect of light.

But let me not forget the pink hue of Mr. Menpes' house, the very colour that Mr. Whistler went down and mixed for him one summer afternoon, when their relations were those of master and pupil.

Here surely is the place for the letter to the *World*, of Dec. 26th, 1888, written a few days after the appearance of the interview in the *Pall Mall*, the only notice Mr. Whistler has taken of it :—

'Nothing matters but the unimportant; so, at the risk of advertising an Australian immigrant of Fulham — who, like the Kangaroo of his country, is born with a pocket and puts everything into it — and, in spite of much wise advice, we ought not to resist the joy of noticing how readily a hurried contemporary has fallen a prey to its superficial knowledge of its various departments, and culminating in a 'Special Edition' to embody a lengthy interview headed 'The Home of Taste,' has discovered again the nest of the mare that was foaled years ago!

'How, by the way, so smart a paper should have printed its *naïf* emotions of ecstacy before

the false colours which the Kangaroo has hoisted over his bush, defies all usual explanation, but clearly the jaunty reporter whose impudent familiarity on a former memorable occasion achieved my wondering admiration, must have been, in stress of business, replaced by a novice who had never breakfasted with you and me, Atlas, and the rest of the world, in the lemon-yellow, of whose beautiful tone he now for the first time is so completely convinced.

'The 'hue' on the 'face' of the Fulham 'Palazzo' he moreover calls 'Venetian,' and is pleased with it — and so was I, Atlas — *for I mixed it myself!*

'And yet, O Atlas, they say that I cannot keep a friend — my dear, I cannot afford it — and you only keep for me their scalps! 'Many, when a thing was lent them, reckoned it to be found, and put them to trouble that helped them.''

Well! apart from the question of fair play, what shall be said of this?

The criminal dulness that has characterized the critics during the progress of the comedy should place the offenders in the grasp of the law for instant execution — without mercy. Or is such dulness inconceivable and conspiracy afoot! Is it possible that the critics have combined against the common foe?

With salt 'trusts,' and sugar 'trusts' abroad in the land, are we to have a critics' 'trust' thrust on us? and has Mr. Menpes been looking after the 'lambs'? Do we not recall the mes-

sage sent once upon a time by Mr. Whistler to the Royal Society of British Artists at a breakfast to the Guild? 'The press ye have always with you. Feed my lambs.'

SHERIDAN FORD.

A London Letter to the
Stanton Newspaper 'Syndicate,' Jan. 19, 1889.

THE NEW JOURNALISM

WE have received a copy of the *Chicago Daily News,* containing an interview with Mr. Mortimer Menpes. The London correspondent of the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* has had a copy of another journal sent to him, and this is his account of it and the leading subject upon which it discourses :—

Some weeks ago the *Pall Mall Gazette* took great interest in Mr. Mortimer Menpes, even going to the length of interviewing him, and giving a minute description of the Juvenile Fancy Dress Ball at his house.

Subsequently Mr. Menpes was visited by Mr. Sheridan Ford, well known as a critic, and to this gentleman he seems to have ' given himself away ' completely. I have before me a copy of a Philadelphia paper which contains more than two columns of small type relating to the interview.

Mr. Menpes seems to have told Mr. Ford that it was he who suggested that the *Pall Mall Gazette* interview should be headed ' The Home of Taste, ' that he had himself supplied the sketches, and that he had himself arranged

with the *Pall Mall Gazette* for the then forthcoming description of the ball. He also declared himself to be the inventor of the style of decoration which has been for many years associated with the name of Mr. Whistler, and altogether made pretensions which everyone who knows the facts must scout as ridiculous and impudent.

Mr. Menpes certainly did not entertain an angel unawares when he received Mr. Ford, for that gentleman gives him such a 'slating' as no artist has received since Mr. Ruskin threw the contents of his inkstand over Mr. Whistler.

The Sunday Times, Mar. 17, 1889.

THE WAY TO SPAIN

MR MENPES has 'given himself away.' . . . According to Mr. Ford, Mr. Menpes explained to him how he managed the press, and how he claimed to be the inventor of the system associated with the name of Mr. Whistler. The Art clubs and the studios have been flooded with the *Philadelphia Daily News*. Mr. Whistler sent on his own copy to Mr. Menpes, with the following note :—

'You will blow your brains out, of course. Pigott has shown you what to do under the circumstances. and you known your way to Spain. Good-bye ! '

HENRY LABOUCHERE.

Truth, Mar. 28, 1889.

SHERIDAN FORD

A LAPSE FROM BROWN-PAPER LESSONS

TELL it not in Gath! An exhibition of Mr. Whistler's work has been opened in the Rev. Stopford Brook's 'College for Working Men and Women!' and all in the name of the middle classes that art may become common among the toilers of the district!

Has Mr. Whistler turned from the joy of purposeless painting to tread the path of the reformer? Can the 'Portrait of my mother'—the Carlyle—the Rose Corder—and a dozen tender landscapes—atone for this lapse from the brown-paper lessons of a decade?

Or is some 'outsider' trying to demonstrate—without war of words or peril to 'scalp'—that certain 'arrangements' have a meaning for 'the people'—denied the dilettante at Burlington House?

. . .

SHERIDAN FORD.

From a London letter. May 14, 1889—to the Bacheller Newspaper '*Syndicate*', reviewing the Whistler Exhibition.

A FEW PIECES OF SILVER

'THEY say that I cannot keep a friend,' wrote once upon a time the witty author of the 'Ten o'Clock.' It would really seem as though, for once, that usually unreliable oracle, 'They say,' spoke words of soberness and truth.

Some time last winter Mr. Ford undertook, with Mr. Whistler's approval, the task of collecting and editing for publication the latter's letters to the London Newspapers, extending over a period of thirty years. To this end Mr. Whistler turned over to Mr. Ford all the data at his command, and the work proceeded apace. Mutual acquaintances of both parties smiled knowingly when they heard of it, and perpetrated pleasing jests as to the possibility of the *entente cordiale* between the two men lasting long enough to see the book completed. One sporting but experienced painter offered odds of twenty to one, without takers, that the writer and the artist would be indulging in 'the gentle

answer that turneth not away wrath' ere the widely scattered letters were garnered and the real work of editing began.

Time, that important factor in all speculative matters, has changed the shrewd guess into accomplished fact, for the free lance whose satire scorched the Claimant of lemon-yellow—along with other fictions of the *Pall Mall Gazette*—and whose praises a few brief weeks ago Mr. Whistler was fond of sounding, has suddenly lost all interest in Tite-street literature.

The story is now going the rounds of the London studios, how, after Mr. Ford was measurably within sight of the promised land of printer's proofs, Mr. Whistler, one fine morning, sweetly asked to have sent him everything collected in the way of copy.

The strangeness of the request sowed the seed of distrust, and Mr. Ford casually inquired with a sweetness akin to the Butterfly's, 'Why?' and was thereupon blandly informed that Mr. Whistler wished to convey the matter entirely out of Mr. Ford's hands, and entrust it to Mr. Whistler's *cher ami*, one Theodore Duret, of Paris, who would kindly take charge of all the letters Mr. Ford had got together, and substitute his own name on the title-page as editor.

Of the scene that ensued at this delicate and generous announcement of a change of base, so charming in its *naïveté*, so frank, so characteristically Whistlerian, of the interchange of

honeyed compliments that followed hard upon, let the curtain of oblivion be drawn.

But the best portion of this refreshing chronicle is yet to come.

At the interview in question, Mr. Whistler's point of view respecting the projected book, as expressed to Mr. Ford, was that M. Duret and *not* Mr. Ford should edit it, and the time element touching the date of publication was not once referred to.

Whether Mr. Whistler was impressed by the way Mr. Ford shook the dust of the Tall Tower from his feet, and the letter printed below was an afterthought, is a problem not altogether insoluble.

But the fact remains that the master, who boasts that he 'never explains,' 'explained,' in a letter wherein *pauvre cher ami* Duret is calmly ignored, and the time element comes serenely cropping up as the one and only disturbing factor, while Mr. Ford, fresh from being delicately told by word of mouth that he is not to be the editor, is, Hudibras-like, assured by a pen and ink medium that he is 'just the man to bring to its completion the work in question.' The correspondence explains itself:—

To Sheridan Ford, Esq.— Let us have no wrong impressions. I thoroughly know that you are just the man to bring to its completion the work in question, and how lucky I am in having interested you in it.

Meanwhile, without going further—for I fear that I have an inherent objection to being at all hurried about anything—do let me recognise slightly the time and care you have taken to give the collection the shape that it already has. I enclose, therefore, cheque for ten guineas. I do not in this way pretend to value the pains you have been at, but in all fairness to each of us you must allow me to see that you are not so far absolutely the loser.

I think, for many reasons, we would do well to postpone the immediate consideration of the proposed publication for awhile. At this moment I find myself curiously interested in certain paintings, the production of which might appropriately be made anterior to more literature.

Aug. 19, 1889.

To J. McNeill Whistler, Esq. — No ! no ! believe me, you state the case clumsily. What you meant to say was, how lucky you were in my having interested you in yourself.

But why ' wrong impressions ' or ' impressions ' of any sort ? Because the prince of impressionists strays sadly a-field — parting company with the refinement that once endeared him to his enemies, shall I have a brutal philanthropy thrust upon me and be buried by the vulgar cheque of commerce ?

Credit it not, though chaos reign in Chelsea! Know also that I am endowed in perpetuity by an all-wise Providence, that Truth may triumph and the foolish in high places be put to shame.

Bestow this counter of the Thing-world on the unworthy poor of your parish, lest ridicule come upon you and it be gleefully set down, by some historian of an idle day, how the Brush sought vainly to besmirch the Pen.

SHERIDAN FORD.

With enclosure. Aug. 20, 1889.

The St. Stephen's Review, Sept. 21, 1889.

SHERIDAN FORD

THE PLAY OF PUBLICITY

SINCE the newspapers dissected your philanthropic *pose*, thirty days have come and gone. The silence on your part is so unalloyed and perfect that the conclusion is warranted there is no response possible. My poor dead McNeill, your folly passes understanding. The 'Cyclist of his suburb,' even, would not have blundered so.

You remember how you donned the war paint a few months back, when a sign-board to which you had put your brush was toyed with by alien hand. Yet you coolly propose that a black and white picture of mine should be signed by a stranger. What delicious inconsistency!

Like all egoists, blind to your own failing, you are singularly exigent as to the fidelity of others.

Your plagiarism of the pretty system of 'scalping' and 'killing' which Edgar Allan Poe, sometime critic, introduced into newspaper controversy with such distinguished success, avails not now.

Here have you, in sight of all London, been disporting yourself merrily these many years, until, sated with 'scalp' and a stranger to

mercy, you imagined yourself tomahawk-proof. And lo! at the first touch of my quill you go down like a squaw!

And did you really fancy that a few pieces of silver would blur my keen sense of justice?

Perhaps you thought you had discovered another 'Arry!

You say that you are cruel and cannot forgive the fool. I can, my dear, but I cannot stop the play of publicity.

For I assure you that the book projected by me, will see the light in due season; and the story of your charming *camaraderie* being now public, will be scheduled with the rest of the trophies. So will this letter.

If there's a telephone connection from your present abode to the place that formerly knew you, beseech the amiable Mr. Hanson to send me any posthumous MSS. in sight. As I am about to confer immortality upon you, you will of course see the wisdom of aiding to make my collection as complete as possible.

Indulge in no delusive hope! I am in the habit of carrying out whatever I undertake. You did not know this, did you?

SHERIDAN FORD.

Oct. 23, 1889.

To J. McNEILL WHISTLER, ESQ.

DISCONSOLATE DISCIPLES

MR. WHISTLER talks of taking up his residence in Paris, and the painters hereabout, who call him master, weep and mourn, and refuse to be comforted. The French Government has recently conferred a decoration upon 'Our James,' and it is, perhaps, only natural that he should wish to air it on the boulevards 'at the hour of the absinthe.'

The St. Stephen's Review, Jan. 18. 1890.

THE NIGHT OF DEATH

HAS your implacable paragrapher no feeling for the fitness of things?

Has History no meaning, no relevancy?

Did I not massacre the McNeill, and you, with wonted recklessness, expose the joyous deed in *St. Stephen's* of September 21st '89?

After he had roamed for sixty years baiting brother painters and ambuscading timorous critics, was it not reserved for me to slay him that Truth might prevail?

Does his Shade not wander comfortless on the Plutonian shore, gibbering feebly 'Take a cheque'?

Is not the soiled white feather catalogued in my collection?

Since wiping him from the face of the earth, have I not been deluged with messages conveying the assurance of the distinguished consideration of Messrs. John Ruskin, Seymour Haden, P. G. Hamerton, Wyke Bayliss, J. C. Horsley, R. A,. M.

Legros, Val. Prinsep, A. R. A., Sidney Colvin, W. P. Frith, R. A., Frederick Wedmore, Sir William Drake, Theodore Child, W. M. Chase, Oscar Wilde, William Stott of Oldham, Harry Quilter, the Claimant of lemon yellow, and the Royal Society of British Artists?

It may be that some pitying coroner, misled by maudlin philanthropy, shall have worried together in winding-sheet of brown-paper the fragments of the wearied one, for sepulture on the banks of the Seine, among the Frenchmen whom in life he shunned, far from the Cockneys whom in life he hunted; but your brilliant readers will at once perceive the marked distinction between a live painter 'taking up his residence,' and the final obsequies of a doomed unfortunate.

No! believe me, the McNeill *is* dead! and not all the paragraphs and paragraph writers can galvanise him into life again.

The official medal is useless now, for airing 'at the hour of the absinthe,' or at the *Mont de Piété*.

And whereas painters, unlike over-paid and opulent men of letters, are supposed to suffer perennially from a chronic scarcity of Cheque, yet, in the case of the deceased, amazing to relate! —it was a superfluity of Cheque that made me kill him!

With the fairness toward the fallen, inseparable from generous minds, I have prepared this touching—though truthful—epitaph:

HIC JACET THE MCNEILL

And none to mourn
his timely taking-off.
Endowed with a subtle sense of form and colour,
Nature—chary of her gifts—
denied him heart.
Let all slight, unmeritable private feuds,
all feverish, feminine love of notoriety, with
the abortive back-stair gossip they engender,
be buried with him in the night of death.
His 'arrangements' in paint,
his dainty etchings,
his brave true words in the cause of Art,
all these—remain.
May he make his peace with God;
he never did with man.

SHERIDAN FORD.

Jan. 20, 1890. Refused publication by the *St. Stephen's Review.*

SOME WHISTLER STORIES
OLD AND NEW

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

PUT THE SONNET IN THE FRAME

DANTE ROSSETTI once showed Whistler a sketch for a picture and asked him how he liked it. 'It has good points, Rossetti,' said Whistler, 'go ahead with it by all means.' A few weeks later he inquired how the work was advancing. 'All right,' answered Rossetti cheerfully; 'I've ordered a stunning frame for it.' Happening in at Rossetti's, in Cheyne Walk, Whistler asked to see the canvas, which was brought out, beautifully framed. 'You've done nothing to it since I saw it, have you?' said Whistler. 'No—o,' replied Rossetti, 'but I've written a sonnet on the subject if you would like to hear it.' The former of course assented, and the poet-painter recited some lines of peculiar tenderness. They were barely ended when Whistler broke in with: 'Rossetti, take out the picture and put the sonnet in the frame!'

THE CARLYLE PORTRAIT

DINNA YE HEAR THE BAGPIPES ?

A SUBSCRIPTION having been started in Scotland to purchase Mr. Whistler's portrait of Carlyle for a public gallery, the painter was asked to fix a price, and he, considering the fitness of the end in view, named five hundred guineas. On this basis the money was nearly all pledged, when the fact became known that the subscription paper stipulated that the subscribers disclaimed any approval of Mr. Whistler's art or art theories. The following telegram to the committee explains why the picture did not go to Scotland : — ' The price of the Carlyle has advanced to one thousand guineas. Dinna ye hear the bagpipes ? '

MR. FRITH'S LITTLE MODEL

MR. FRITH had a little girl for a model one day, and, to give her an animated expression, entered into conversation: 'Have you been sitting to any one lately?' 'Yes, sir; to Mr. Cope.' 'Anyone else?' 'Mr. Horsley.' 'Ah — Horsley — any one else?' 'I sat to Mr. Whistler yesterday.' 'What did he say?' 'He asked me if I had been sitting to any one, and I told him to Mr. Cope.' 'What did he say to that?' 'He asked whom else, and I said to Mr. Horsley.' 'What did he say then?' 'He asked me whom else, and I said I had been sitting to you, sir.' 'Well, and what did he say then?' 'He said, '*What a d——d crew!*'"

HARDLY A WARM PERSONAL ENEMY LEFT

WHEN Tom Taylor died a friend said to Mr. Whistler: — 'What makes you look so glum to-day?' 'Me?' said Whistler. 'Who else has such cause to mourn? Tommy's dead. I'm lonesome. They are all dying. I have hardly a warm personal enemy left!'

THE FINE ART SOCIETY

A SUDDEN ENCOUNTER

THE Secretary of the Fine Art Society informed Mr. Whistler by letter, while one of his exhibitions was in progress, that the Board had decided to adopt his views touching a certain vexed question that had arisen, and as his wishes had been graciously met they trusted that there would be no further occasion for dispute. 'Graciously, say you!' wrote Whistler in reply; 'not at all. They met them like the late lamented Tzar met the bomb.'

FINE ART AND FOOT GEAR

THE Fine Art Society rendered Mr. Whistler a bill for expenses incurred in connection with one of his exhibitions, and, with that thoughtfulness which characterizes the gentle brotherhood of dealers in their intercourse with painters, included among other interesting items one for the hose worn during the continuance of the exhibition by a gallery attendant named Cox. 'I shall pay for nothing of Cox's,' said Whistler indignantly, 'neither his socks, nor his, 'ose, nor anything that is his.'

WHICH OF YOU TWO INVENTED THE OTHER?

MR. DU MAURIER and Mr. Wilde happening to meet in the rooms where Mr. Whistler was holding his first exhibition of Venice etchings, the latter brought the two face to face, and taking each by the arm, inquired:

'I say, which one of you two invented the other, eh?'

THOUGHTFUL CONSERVATISM

MR. COMYNS CARR meeting Mr. Whistler after his election to the presidency of the Society of British Artists the latter remarked in a joking way, 'Carr, you haven't congratulated me yet.' 'No,' was the retort, 'I'm waiting till the correspondence begins.'

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

ITS HISTORY DATES FROM TO-DAY

THE Society of British Artists did not possess a Royal Charter till Mr. Whistler became president. On the occasion of the first visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales to the Gallery, Mr. Whistler was in attendance to welcome him. 'I'm sure,' said the Prince, as he paused a moment at the door, 'I never heard of this place, Mr. Whistler, until you brought it to my notice. What is its history?' 'It has none, your Highness,' was the quiet rejoinder. 'Its history dates from to-day.'

A SINKING SHIP

WHEN matters were approaching a crisis in the Royal Society of British Artists, and every vote counted, one of Mr. Whistler's followers suddenly resigned. 'Ah!' said Whistler—'the early rat. The first to leave the sinking ship!'

SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON

LIKE A DIAMOND IN THE STY

AFTER the secession of the Whistler party from the Royal Society of British Artists, Mr. Whistler strolled into the gallery one evening with a party of friends. An admiring group of members were standing before a Leighton canvas in the place of honour in the large room. ' Quite exquisite ! ' they cried. 'A gem—really a gem. ' ' Yes, ' said Whistler, with a smile, ' like a diamond in the sty ! '

PAINTS, TOO!

THE versatility of the President of the Royal Academy is a fruitful topic of conversation with his admirers. ‘ He is really a marvellous man, ’ said a lady in Mr. Whistler’s presence. ‘ As an orator, his flow of eloquence is simply unmatched.’ ‘ Yes—es, ’ said Whistler. ‘ Then look at his powers as a linguist, ’ said the lady ; ‘ why, he can converse fluently in eight or ten languages. ’ ‘ Ye—es, ’ said Whistler. ‘ And what a genius as a sculptor, ’ continued the lady ; ‘ and in society what accomplished manners he has, what a distinguished and courtly air ! ’ There was a momentary silence. ‘ Paints, too, ’ drawled Whistler, dreamily playing with the white lock.

NATURE'S CREEPING UP

A LADY was telling Mr. Whistler of a trip up the Thames and, growing enthusiastic over the beauty of the scenery, remarked : — ' It was really a perfect series of Whistlers. ' ' Yes, I daresay, ' was the reply. ' Nature's creeping up. '

THEIR LABOUR IS BUT VAIN

MR. WHISTLER, when leaving the White House, put this legend over the door:—

'Unless the Lord build the house their labour is but vain that build it. E. W. Godwin, F. S. A., built this one.'

LIVING NEXT DOOR TO HIMSELF

'TO think of 'Arry living in the temple I erected,' said Whistler. 'He has no use for it—doesn't know what to do with it. If he had any feeling for the symmetry of things he would come to me and say, 'Here's your house, Whistler; take it; you know its meaning, I don't. Take it and live in it.' 'But no; he hasn't sense enough to see that. He obstinately stays there in the way, while I am here living in this absurd fashion—next door to myself.'

WHY DRAG IN VELASQUEZ?

'I ONLY know of two painters in the world,' said a newly introduced acquaintance to Mr. Whistler—'yourself and Velasquez.' 'Why,' answered Whistler, in dulcet tones, 'why drag in Velasquez?'

THE DILETTANTE

NO EXCUSE FOR IT

THERE'S a certain dilettante in London whose vagaries of taste have sometimes made Mayfair marvel. He had long sought a visit from Mr. Whistler but, until a mutual acquaintance intervened, without avail. A day and hour were finally fixed for the painter to pass judgment on his collection. Mr. Whistler kept the appointment, and the accumulated art treasures brought together with lavish hand were passed in review for critical censure or approval. Not a word escaped him as the show progressed, save a sober 'H'm, H'm', that might mean anything or nothing. The dilettante was nonplussed. For the first time in its history his collection had failed to elicit enthusiasm, either assumed or real. When there was no more to see, Mr. Whistler gazed at his host with a look of compassionate censure, and exclaimed, without a smile or twinkle of the eye :—' My dear sir, there's really no excuse for it—no excuse for it at all ! '

DON'T WAIT

AT Mr. Wilde's wedding, this telegram was handed in at the church door :

From Whistler, Chelsea, to Oscar Wilde, St. James' Church, Sussex Gardens. — 'Fear I may not be able to reach you in time for ceremony — Don't wait.'

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ONCE, when the two were together, and Mr. Whistler had perpetrated a characteristic *mot*, Mr. Wilde exclaimed: — 'Heavens! I wish I had said that.' 'You will,' said Whistler.

A FATUOUS ADDITION

AMONG the Whistler etchings sold at Messrs. Sotherby's in 1888 was a proof of an early work, warmly competed for, not only because of its artistic merit, but, from a collector's point of view, because of a quaint and characteristic inscription of Mr. Whistler's :— 'Legs not by me, but a fatuous addition by a General Practitioner.'

F. SEYMOUR HADEN

MORNING BITTERS

THE Hon. Mr. Justice Day and Mr. Whistler met one morning at the Galleries of the Fine Art Society, where a Whistler exhibition was in progress. While they were inspecting some etchings, Dr. Seymour Haden suddenly appeared, and observing Whistler, as suddenly withdrew. 'Ha, ha!' exclaimed Whistler with a flourish of the slender wand, 'I see. Dropped in for his morning bitters!'

A BOLD PHILANTHROPIST

AT the dinner to Mr. Whistler at the Criterion, it came out that the absence of Mr. Justin McCarthy, M.P., was due to umbrage at the fact that his friend, the Claimant of lemon-yellow, had not been invited by the committee. Mr. Whistler naturally had the fact brought to his notice, but, with a habit rare in him, passed it at the time in silence. At the dinner to Mr. Christie Murray, however, a few evenings later, which Mr. Whistler attended, Mr. McCarthy was also present. As they met in the course of the evening, Mr. Whistler remarked to the M.P., 'You're a bold man and a philanthropist. But remember, *Damien died*.'

ART: A COMMODITY

By SHERIDAN FORD

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